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LANCASHIRE NONCONFORMITY;

OR,

SKETCHES, HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE,

OF THE

Congregational and Old Presbyterian Churches
in the County.

BY THE REV. B. NIGHTINGALE,

*Author of the "History of the Old Independent Chapel,
Tockholes."*



THE CHURCHES OF PRESTON, NORTH LANCASHIRE,
AND WESTMORLAND.



MANCHESTER:
JOHN HEYWOOD, DEANSGATE AND RIDGEFIELD;
AND 1, PATERNOSTER BUILDINGS,
LONDON.

MANUEL



THIS VOLUME
OF
Nonconformist History
IS
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
TO THE
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES AND MINISTERS
OF THE
PRESTON DISTRICT.

P R E F A C E.

IN sending forth the first instalment of "Lancashire Nonconformity" a few prefatory sentences are necessary. Most of the articles incorporated in this volume have already appeared in *The Preston Guardian*; and it is at the earnest request of many friends that I have undertaken to publish them in a collected form. The work does not in any sense appear as a rival to Dr. Halley's charming book; for whilst in many minor points that work is seriously inaccurate, yet it has a value quite its own, and will hold the field alone for many years to come. The two works need only be compared to see that they proceed along different lines, that neither supersedes the other, but that they may be mutually helpful. It is claimed that the present work is unique. Nonconformist histories have been written for several counties, but in each case they are little more than a bare recital of facts and dates, and so are useful only as books of reference. In the present instance, whilst the most rigid accuracy has been sought after, an attempt has been made to popularise the subject, by descriptive notes and stories, traditionary and authentic. How far the attempt has been attended with success the reader must judge.

It has been stated that the articles contained herein have appeared for the most part in a weekly newspaper. They have, however, been carefully revised, and many new facts added unto them. This volume has been described, also, as the "first instalment;" the second will appear almost immediately, dealing with the Blackburn District. Four other volumes will follow, which will cover the entire county, if these meet with an acceptance such as to warrant further effort. The materials for more than half of them are in hand, consequently it rests with the Congregationalists of Lancashire to say if the mass of information which, after years of diligent research, has been brought to light, shall be preserved and placed within their reach. It is necessary to repeat what has been stated in the advertisements and circulars: that whilst each volume is a part of the whole work, yet it is complete in itself.

Nothing but a deep conviction of the need of such a work, and my interest in the subject, could have induced me, amidst the increasing demands of a busy pastorate, to enter upon so weighty an undertaking. Thus far it certainly has been "a work of faith," and to the end will be a "labour of love." Of the part now sent forth, no one can be a severer critic than myself. It has often been a matter of regret to me that so worthy a subject had not an abler and more experienced pen. One thing has been borne home to my mind with painful certainty whilst engaged in the work—that it is next to impossible to write perfectly correct history. In so many cases documentary evidence is not available, whilst I regret to say that the "Congregational Year Book" and the "Lancashire Congregational Calendar" are often exceedingly faulty and misleading; and if the publication of this work will lead to greater care in the compilation of those, the gain will not be small. Still every effort has been made to secure reliable information, and should any reader note any error, a communication to that effect will be welcomed.

It remains for me to acknowledge my indebtedness to the many friends who have contributed to make the work what it is. My warmest thanks are given to the Pastors and Deacons of the churches whose histories are here written, for the readiness with which they placed at my disposal their church documents and answered my inquiries. To Robert Mansergh, Esq., of Lancaster, I owe much for the "Minutes of the Preston District," as also to the Rev. R. M. Davies, of Oldham, for "Reports of the Lancashire Congregational Union," and to Henry Fisher, Esq., J.P., of Blackpool, for several original documents. Mr. Rose, also, of *The Lancashire Evening Post*, has given me several valuable typographical and literary hints.

For many of the illustrations with which the work is embellished, I am indebted to the gentlemen whose names appear in the list of contents.

In the hope that it will stimulate to the study of Nonconformist history, serve as a bond of union between the churches of the district which it covers, by increasing their knowledge of each other, and contribute somewhat towards the enlargement of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, this volume is sent forth.

BENJAMIN NIGHTINGALE.

Fishergate Hill, Preston.

Dec. 1st, 1890.

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LANCASHIRE NONCONFORMITY.



THE CHURCHES OF PRESTON, NORTH LANCASHIRE,
AND WESTMORLAND.

LANCASHIRE NONCONFORMITY.

CHAPTER I.

PRESTON AND NEIGHBOURHOOD.

I.—THE REV. ISAAC AMBROSE AND EARLY NONCONFORMITY.

FEW Lancashire towns have played a more important part in the history of the county than the ancient town of Preston. Our local historians inform us that in the first century of our era the Romans had a station at Walton hard by, by means of which the fierce inhabitants of these northern regions were kept under subjection. In the year 937 a great battle was fought between Athelstan and the Danes on the Ribble banks, in the neighbourhood of Preston, and from this time the town came to occupy quite a prominent place in the county. The old chronicler Hollinshead tells us that Robert Bruce, the Scottish King, "entered England by Carlisle, kept on his way through Cumberland, Westmorland, and Lancashire to Preston, which town he burnt as he had done some others in the counties he had passed through." This was in 1323. A little over three centuries ago, when everybody daily expected the descent of the Spanish Armada on English shores, the gentry, magistrates, and freeholders of the County of Lancaster were summoned "to meet Lord Strange at Preston, on the 13th of July, 1588." It was considered not at all improbable that a landing would be attempted at Morecambe Bay, which was said to be "the

very best haven for landing with great shyppes in all the south-west coast of England called St. George's Channel." ¹ Royalty honoured Preston with its presence in 1616 in the person of James I., and the municipal authorities presented this "wisest fool in Christendom," on bended knees, with the town's mace, a key, and a purse of gold, in reply to which the King said: "Cot's, splutters! what a set of liege men have come to see Jemmy." During the Civil Wars the town was twice besieged, taken and re-taken by the two contending parties, and not far from Walton "the Darwen stream with the blood of Scots was imbrued" by Cromwell and his forces. In 1715, during the Jacobite insurrection, the town was again besieged, and we shall have to record how one of the Dissenting ministers of Preston for a season laid aside his spiritual armour for "weapons carnal," and played a not unworthy part therein. In the second unfortunate attempt of the Pretender in 1745 to regain his ancestral throne, Preston was occupied by Prince Charlie and his army. On more than one occasion, in more modern days, the town has entertained Royalty, and so figured largely before the nation, and its latest venture in the Ribble scheme has won for it a notoriety, whether desirable or otherwise let each reader decide for himself. But with the general history of the town we are not much concerned at present. That has been well covered by Whittle, Hardwick, and Hewitson's Histories. Nor are we even concerned with its general religious history, but with the rise and progress of Nonconformity in its Congregational form. As in many other cases, the first indications of Dissent will be found in the Parish Church itself, consequently there is our starting point; and it will be sufficient if we begin when Nonconformity makes its appearance. This was in the time of the Commonwealth; its first known exponent and representative being the Rev. Isaac Ambrose. Of this worthy man considerable information is forthcoming, which will be interesting at least to Lancashire Nonconformists. The Ambrose family is an old Lancashire family, being found for generations in these north and north-western parts. At Lowick, in the parish of Ulverston, they had considerable possessions in the early part of the fifteenth century; at Woodplumpton, Ambrose Hall was occupied by them, and also Catforth Hall.

¹ Hardwick's "History of Preston," p. 141.

Another very important branch of the family appears at Ormskirk, from which Isaac Ambrose descended. His father was the Rev. Richard Ambrose, vicar of Ormskirk, who was buried in the chancel of the church there on the 7th of February, 1612-13. Isaac Ambrose was the youngest of six children, and was baptised at Ormskirk, on the 29th of May, 1604. He probably received his early education at the Free Grammar School in that town, and in his seventeenth year matriculated at Oxford from Brasenose College, took his B.A. degree there, and his M.A. degree at Magdalen College, Cambridge. On leaving college he was presented to the vicarage of Castleton, Derbyshire, being instituted there on the 17th of June, 1627, where he remained until 1631. His next appointment was to the office of "King's preacher," being stationed at Garstang, and having as salary about £50 a year. About 1633 Isaac Ambrose was married, his first child being baptised at Garstang on the 25th of January, 1634-5. Here he remained until 1640 or 1641, when he was appointed to the vicarage of Preston, in succession to the Rev. James Starkie, still retaining the office of King's preacher. His appointment here, he states, was in large measure due to Lady Margaret Hoghton, wife of Sir Gilbert Hoghton. "The Lord made her," he says, "his first wheel of his Providence" in bringing him to this place. What led him to cast in his lot with the Puritan and Nonconformist party we do not know, but from the very first he did this. An interesting letter of his to the Rev. Elkanah Wales, M.A., is still preserved in the British Museum, which shows that his position in the county was an important one, and also witnesses to his concern for the spiritual well-being of its inhabitants. The letter reads as follows:

"Our Colonel Rigby hath enjoined me to write to you a call unto these needful barren pts. And his desire is that you would please to settle yourself at Rufford. It is a place where his son-in-law and daughter are likely to reside, and therefore he hath an especial respect unto it. He is pleased to allow you fifty pounds per annum. For Tockholes, if you can provide another able, honest minister, he will (so that he may obtain you) allow him as much there. Her father desired it that you would speak to some other honest ministers (to the number of six at least) to come unto

these parts, and they shall have a suitable competency to their deserts. So desiring your furtherance, I rest your loving friend and brother in the ministry. Preston, Oct. 19, 1643.—ISAAC AMBROSE.”¹

In 1646 Presbyterianism was established in Lancashire, and Mr. Ambrose is the first name in the seventh classis. Two documents were drawn up by the Lancashire Presbyterian Ministers in 1648 and 1649, called respectively “The Harmonious Consent” and “The Agreement of the People,” and both bear his signature. From the Parliamentary Survey of 1650, where he is again named, the following passage is extracted :—

“That the parish of Preston in the said Hundred doth contayne wthin itselſe the Viccaradge of Preston, beinge a Viccaradge presentative by Sr. *Richard Hoghton*, Baronett, Patron, and Impropiator of the tithes of the whole parish (excepting the tithes of Barton and Elston) . . . Mr. Isaacke Ambrose, a painefull minister, is Viccar at Preston, And receives for his Sallarie the profits of the whole viccaridge, which about thirtie yeares since was worth a hundred Marks p. Annu, But in these distractted troublesome tymes the same is not soe much worth ; Besides there is fiftie pounds p. annu. Augmentacon by order from the Comittee of Plundred Ministers ; And the said Mr. Ambrose hath had allowed him fiftie pounds p. annu, forth of the Revenue of the Dutchie, as one of the foure Itinerant Ministers wthin the County.”²

During his residence at Garstang as King’s preacher, he was greatly endeared unto the people, and repeatedly afterwards they sought to obtain him as their minister. It was not, however, until 1655 that their efforts in this respect were successful. The following is a copy of their petition to the London Committee, in whose hands the appointment lay :

“To the Revend Com. for approbation of ministers assembled at London.

¹ “Lancashire Puritanism and Nonconformity,” by Dr. Halley. Vol. ii., p. 503.

² “Commonwealth Survey” (Record Society, Vol. i.), pp. 144-146.

"The humble petition of y^e Inhabitants of y^e parish of Garstang, within y^e Countie of Lancaster.

"Sheweth. That whereas D^r. Wyldbore, late vicar of y^e said parish, was heretofore sequestred for delinquencie [10 April, 1645], and thereupon y^e well affected in that parish, petitioned for Mr. Ambrose to y^e Countie there, who had an order granted to him accordingly. But Pr. Ruperts forces being in y^e said Countie, and other inconveniences retarded M^r. Ambrose at that time, whereupon M^r. Edmundson (without any call or knowledge of ours), by y^e meanes of some souldiers enters into y^e place. Now y^e said Dr. Wyldbore being lately deceased [April, 1654], and y^e petitioners with all y^e Godly round about us, hauving longe desired M^r. Ambrose to bee our Minister, diuers both of them and us being able to call him our spirituall father, of whose godly life and orthodox doctrine our whole Countie hath a singular and eminent esteeme, a truth (we believe) not unknown to many of y^r selues. And lastly, there being a great necessitie of such a reverend and able man amongst us, in regard to y^e extraordinarie profanenes and lukewarmnes, poperie, and seuerall strange heresies soe much abounding in the parish. Therefore our humble petition is Mr. Ambrose (haueing taken much paynes amongst us, and haueing ever a tender care ouer us), might be now sent unto us from y^e godlye Assemblie as y^e happye fruite of our prayers to god addresses to you."

Here follow the signatures of the petitioners.

The exact date of his appointment at Garstang is not known, but it was sometime in the year 1655. It cost him much to leave his Preston flock, to which he was deeply attached. Referring to this matter some three years later, he says: "The sun hath [1658] twice now run his course through either tropick since that day of humiliation when we met, both to bewaile our sins and to order my steps in my removal from you; such a flood of teares in these times of spiritual drought and hardness of heart I have seldome seene; was not the chamber a *Bochim*? Could you have wept more if you had brought me to my grave? such chaines were these teares and prayers that (notwithstanding my resolutions) for

¹ Original MS. in the Salford Free Library, Peel Park. Printed in the "History of Garstang" (Chetham Society Series, vol. cv.), p. 167.

that twelve month I could not go. I said to you, 'let me go, for the day breaketh.' But in your wrestling with God, you answered as Jacob did, 'we will not let thee go.' It is some comfort that I shall not be farre distant from you . . . but though I lie in the dark, and henceforth be as a man forgotten in the world, yet I shall remember you in my prayers."¹ Failing health was probably the principal cause of his retirement to Garstang, where he says: "Instead of those hurries, jarres, envies, pride, discord, and policies of men in streets and Towns, I shall now walk the silent fields and woods, and hear more frequently the various tunes of melodious birds and keep consort with them, who, without jarres, are ever in their kind praising God."² In this quiet retreat he would find many opportunities for meditation and prayer, to which he was much given. Calamy says that "it was his usual custom once a year, for the space of a month, to retire into a little hut³ in a wood, and avoiding all human converse to devote himself to contemplation."⁴ Here he composed one or two works and revised others for the press. On the 4th of January, 1657, he was called upon to preach a funeral sermon for his friend and patroness Lady Margaret Hoghton. The sermon, a copy of which is in my possession, bears the following title: "Redeeming the Time. A Sermon preached at Preston, in Lancashire, January 4th, 1657, at the Funerall of the Honourable Lady, the Lady Margaret Houghton. Revised and somewhat Enlarged; and at the importunity of some friends now published. By Isaac Ambrose, Preacher of the

¹ "Looking unto Jesus," p. 51.

² Ibid., p. 255.

³ The following is extracted from the *Preston Chronicle* of July 23rd, 1836: "All persons who are acquainted with the writings of Isaac Ambrose, ejected minister from Garstang, after the passing of the Act of Uniformity, in the year 1652 [misprint for 1662], will feel interested in hearing that on the very spot (as nearly as can be ascertained) in Woodacre Wood on which the rev. gentleman's hut was built, and in which, during his ministry in Garstang for the space of one month in a year, he spent the life of a recluse in fasting and in prayer, Mr. Thomas Smith, of Scorton, the Duke of Hamilton's gamekeeper, has built another, and on Saturday last, at Mr. Smith's expense, 49 children, besides ladies and gentlemen, took tea in this newly-erected cabin. Thus, for the first time, this noted spot of solitude became a place of social festivity."

⁴ "Nonconformist's Memorial" (1802). Vol. ii., p. 363.

Gospel at Garstange, in the same county. London : Printed by T.C., for Nath. Webb and William Grantham, at the Black Bear, in Pauls Churchyard, near the little north door of Pauls, 1658." The funeral took place at night ; the following is Mr. Ambrose's account of the matter :—

"As they were pleased who had the managing power to choose the night to inter her [Lady Hoghton's] corps, so it proved a night of great disorder ; much ado had we to pass through the streets with the corps for the throng of the people, but more ado had we to enter the Church-door, where she must be interred ; and after the Body was laid in the dust, such a noise was raised by the multitude that I plainly perceived I could not be heard. At last, I begun with prayer, and I found my voice too low, and my spirit too much distracted with the noise about me ; so that, cutting it short, I was fain to desire the silence as well as patience of my hearers. In this confusion, most standing in the seats when they should have sate, I saw a necessity of straining my voice to the highest pitch ; and though I did so, yet many who desired to hear could not hear, and those who did hear had not their desires in hearing all that I would have said."¹

The Act of Uniformity in 1662 led to his ejection from Garstang, the order for which is dated August 27, 1662. After his ejection he came to live at Preston, occupying a house in what is now St. John Street. He died here, and was buried at Preston on the 25th January, 1663-4, in the 59th year of his age.² Calamy thus writes of his end : "He spent the latter part of his time at Preston ; and when his end drew near was very sensible of it. Having taken his leave of many of his friends abroad with unusual solemnity, as if he foresaw that he should see them no more, he came home, and set all things in order. When some of his hearers came from Garstang to visit him he discoursed freely with them, gave them good counsel, told them he was now ready whenever his Lord should call, and that he had finished all he designed to write, having the night before sent away his *Discourse concerning Angels*

¹ "Redeeming the Time." (Preface.)

² From the Parish Register : "Isaac Ambrose, clearke, heretofore vicar of the parish of Preston. 25 day (January, 1663-4) Sepultus."

to the press. He accompanied his friends to their horses, and when he came back shut himself in his parlour, the place of his retirement. Being thought to stay long, the door was opened, and he was found just expiring. . . . He was holy in his life, happy in his death, and honoured by God and all good men.”¹ Mr. Ambrose had three children, one of whom, Rachel, baptised at Garstang, January 25th, 1634-5, married Joseph Moxon, of Bolton. Henry Newcome records a visit to Mrs. Moxon thus on November 23rd, 1669: “I went to Bolton. . . . I was unfit for any service, and yet I would visit Mr. Moxon’s wife (who died soon after;) and it was simply upon this consideration that I think her good father, Mr. Ambrose, would in the like case have done more for me than this.”² A flat tombstone in the Bolton Parish Churchyard records the death of Mrs. Moxon, December 31, 1669, and that of her husband Joseph Moxon on the 29th of November, 1694, aged 63 years. Augustine and Richard were the other two children of Mr. Isaac Ambrose, both of whom were baptised at Garstang. On the death of Mr. Ambrose his wife, Mrs. Judith Ambrose, went to Bolton to reside with her daughter, Mrs. Moxon, and, dying there, was interred within the Parish Church at Bolton on the 20th of August, 1668. Mr. Ambrose was the author of several works in addition to the sermon already named, some of which have become very scarce.³

He was succeeded at Preston by Mr. (afterwards Dr.) William Cole. Like his predecessor, he was Nonconformist in many respects. “Soon after the Restoration,” says Calamy, “there was a meeting of above twenty ministers at Bolton, to consult what course to take. Mr. Ambrose and Mr. Cole, of Preston, declared before them all, that they could read the Common Prayer, and should do it, the state of their places requiring it, in which otherwise their service was now necessarily at an end. The ministers, considering the circumstances of their case, approved their proceeding. Mr. Cole declared that he had got to his *Ne plus ultra*,

¹ “Nonconformist’s Memorial” (1802). Vol. ii., p. 363.

² “Newcome’s Autobiography” (Chetham Society, vol. xxvi.) p. 182.

³ For much of the information respecting Mr. Ambrose, I am indebted to Colonel Fishwick’s “History of Garstang,” previously named.

and could comply no farther."¹ His Nonconformity cost him his living at Preston; but he was afterwards appointed lecturer at Dedham, in Essex, where he conformed. With the history of the Parish Church we have no further concern, as ministers from the days of Dr. Cole onwards have been Episcopalian.

II.—THE UNITARIAN CHAPELS, PRESTON AND WALTON-LE-DALE.

It is not improbable that the Nonconformity of Ambrose and Cole, set forth in the last article, would have its influence upon the town. Nor must it be forgotten that the Hoghtons of Hoghton Tower from the days of Sir Richard, who succeeded to the title and estates of his father, Sir Gilbert Hoghton, in 1647, were staunch Nonconformists. The tower was often an asylum for the persecuted Dissenters, a rendezvous for celebrated preachers, and for many years a little congregation of Nonconformists was accustomed to meet for worship in the large apartment in the north-west wing, formerly the dining-hall. It is not likely, therefore, that the Hoghtons would allow an important town like Preston to be overlooked in their zeal for Nonconformity. And though we have no certain evidence that a definite society of Nonconformists existed in the town before the eighteenth century, yet there were probably a few who had not forgotten Ambrose and Cole, who were protected and encouraged by the Hoghton family, who met for worship in their houses or wherever opportunity offered. In support of this is the statement of Calamy in his account of the Rev. John Parr. Speaking of the times when Dissenters suffered so grievously under the Act of Uniformity and the Conventicle Act, he says of Mr. Parr that "he preached sometimes at Preston and sometimes at Walton, about a mile off. . . . He met with many sufferings and hardships. Preaching once at a chapel not far from Preston, before he had concluded there came two neighbouring justices, who took his name and the names of several hearers. Some of them

¹ "Nonconformist's Memorial" (1802). Vol. ii., p. 362.

made friends, and got off ; but he and four more were bound over to the quarter sessions, and proceeded against as rioters.”¹ Mr. Parr for some time ministered unto the Darwen Nonconformists, when they obtained the license in 1672, which permitted them to worship in the house of “William and Henry Berry,” of Darwen. The Rev. Thomas Jollie, of Wymondhouses, near Clitheroe, in his Church Book under date 1672, tells about a man being prevented through a dream from going “to hear Mr. Parr, of Darwen.” He had gone from Darwen before 1687, and from Calamy’s statement above given it is safe to infer that at that time he was minister of the Walton and Preston Dissenters. Mr. Abram, in his “History of Blackburn,” says: “Towards the close of the 17th century, a Presbyterian-Nonconformist preaching-place existed in Walton, at which Mr. John Parr, an ejected minister, preached alternately with Preston.”² Of this Walton chapel more will be given later on. From this, it may therefore be concluded with tolerable certainty, that in Preston itself there was a congregation of Dissenters towards the end of the 17th century. Mr. Parr died about 1714. It is said that “his conversation was strictly pious and regular ; his temper meek and peaceable ; and his preaching affectionate, searching, and useful.”³ The Preston and Walton Dissenters elected for their next minister the Rev. John Turner, in 1714. He was born in 1689, educated by the Rev. James Coningham, of Manchester,⁴ and married Hannah Holder, widow, a daughter of William Chorley, Esq., of Preston. From another daughter of this gentleman came the Rev. Richard Astley, for many years Dissenting minister at Shrewsbury, whose father—the Rev. Thomas Astley—we shall meet with later amongst the Preston ministers. Related to Mr. Chorley, of Preston, also were the Rev. Josiah Chorley, M.A., of Norwich, author of a curious metrical index to the Bible ; and the Rev. Richard Chorley, of Framlingham, Suffolk. Mr. Turner, along with “Parson Woods,” of Chowbent, and Mr. Walker, of Horwich, very materially helped to keep back the tide of insurrection when the Scotch rebels, in 1715,

¹ “Nonconformist’s Memorial” (1802). Vol. ii., p. 382.

² P. 742.

³ “Nonconformist’s Memorial” (1802). Vol. ii., p. 382.

⁴ “Memorials of a Dissenting Chapel,” by Sir Thomas Baker. p. 121

entered Preston. The following passage gives an account of the part Mr. Turner played in this matter :—

“The Rev. John Turner, at that time Protestant Dissenting minister there [Preston], was, upon the breaking out of the first rebellion, eminently serviceable to the cause of the reigning family. Firmly attached to the principles of the revolution and the succession of the crown in the House of Hanover, he left his wife and infant child, and, with many of the younger part of his congregation, joined the army under General Willes by whom they were, with great propriety, on account of their knowledge of the country, employed as scouts—to procure information and to observe the motions of the rebels. In one of these nocturnal excursions, Mr. Turner had the good fortune to fall in with, and being of strong athletic constitution, to take prisoner and bring safe back with him to the camp, a confidential servant of one of the principal Roman Catholic gentry, who was going from his master with some important intelligence to the rebels. For this service he had the public thanks of General Willes.”¹

Mr. Turner left Preston in 1716 for Rivington, where he remained only about a year, leaving for Wirksworth, in Derbyshire. He next succeeded the Rev. John Partington, at Northwich, in 1724,² and in 1735 he appears as minister of the Dissenting congregation at Knutsford, in Cheshire. He died here on the 12th of October, 1737, at a comparatively early age. In an account of him by one of his descendants, it is said that he was a Calvinist of the most strict and rigid form, and maintained his Calvinism through life. A stern and arbitrary disposition made him the object of fear as well as attachment to his nearest connections. From Mr. Turner sprang an eminent race of Dissenting ministers, though very early they put their “Calvinism” aside. His son was the Rev. William Turner, born in Preston on the 5th of December, 1714, for more than thirty years Unitarian minister of Wakefield,

¹ “Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Rev. William Turner, of Wakefield,” by the Rev. William Wood.

² “Nonconformity in Cheshire” (Urwick), p. 393. Mr. Urwick says that the Northwich Turner was from Rivington; if so, he was the Preston Turner, but he did not remain at Northwich as long as Mr. Urwick says.

who died in 1794. His grandson was the Rev. William Turner, for many years Unitarian minister at Newcastle-on-Tyne, who died in 1859, at the age of ninety-seven years. His great-grandson was the Rev. William Turner, M.A., Mathematical tutor in the Manchester New College (1809-27), and afterwards Unitarian minister of Halifax. His great-great-grandson was the Rev. John Gooch Robberds, for several years one of the Cross Street ministers, Manchester; and *his* son, the Rev. C. W. Robberds, still living at Cheltenham without pastoral charge, was one of the Rivington ministers. About the year 1716 a place of worship was erected for the Preston Nonconformists, near the bottom of Church Street. This building yet stands, though it has been considerably altered. It is best entered from Percy Street, but to the left going down Church Street is also an entrance. Until recently there might be seen here a little signboard pointing to a long narrow alley—not very inviting—by which the passers-by were informed where the Unitarian Chapel stands. The passage has within the last few months been considerably widened, thereby rendering the approach from Church Street more comfortable and attractive. A small door facing Church Street leads into the organ chamber, which is a modern addition, and at the Percy Street end is also a new portion which gives a minister's vestry and room for Sunday school purposes. In the graveyard attached to the chapel are a few interesting tombstones, though not of much age. The oldest I noticed belonged to the Pilkington family, the first date upon which is April 1st, 1795, and the last, February 22nd, 1851. A conspicuous object in the graveyard is the tombstone owned by the Ainsworth family, once important members of the congregation. The chapel is as unpretentious internally as it is without. The pulpit and the organ (the gift of Mr. Dalby a few years ago) are directly in front on entering from Percy Street. A single aisle runs from the door to the pulpit, on each side of which lie the pews, all open. To the right of the pulpit are three mural tablets, one to "Mr. David Ainsworth," who died May 13th, 1819, in the forty-sixth year of his age; the second to "Thomas Ainsworth, Esq.," who died September 29th, 1853, aged seventy-six years; and the third to "William Winstanley, M.D.," who died in London, May 15, 1852, in the eightieth year of his age. A small gallery is over

the entrance from Percy Street, and, if mine is a common experience, "few there be that *find* it." The chapel has been recently repaired and beautified. When erected 170 years ago it accommodated 150 people; now about 220 may find room in it. It is generally supposed that Mr. Turner was gone before this building was erected, and he was succeeded by the Rev. John Pilkington, in 1716. He was trained by the Rev. E. Rothwell, of Tunley, near Wigan, and was ordained, together with the Rev. Mr. Jones, of Hatherlow, on the 19th of August, 1718, at Knutsford. The following account of the ordination service is from the minutes of the Cheshire Classis:—

"August 19, 1718. Mr. Jones, of Hatherlow, and Mr. Pilkington, of Walton, in Lancashire, were ordained at this meeting. They read their theses that morning. Mr. Jones his question was, *An Sacra Scriptura Sit perfecta ita ut Continent illa omnia quæ ad salutem necessaria sunt*; affirmative. Mr Pilkington's was, *An Christus sit vere Deus Patri coessentialis et coeternalis*; affirmative. Afterwards, in a numerous assemblage of ministers and people met together in the New Chapel [Knutsford], they were both solemnly set apart for the office and work of the ministry. The minister of the place began with prayer and reading some portions of Scripture. Then Mr. Cottor [of London] prayed before the sermon, which was preached by Mr. Worthington [of Dean Row] from I. Corinthians, ix., 27, *But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means when I have preached to others I myself should be a castaway*. After the sermon ended, Mr. Jollie [of Attercliffe] called for a confession of their faith, which they made before the congregation, and then he put the usual questions to them, which they answered *verbis conceptis*, and afterwards they were set apart by prayer and imposition of hands of Mr. Worthington, who prayed over Mr. Jones; Mr. Jollie, who prayed over Mr. Pilkington; Mr. Cotton, Mr. Waterhouse, Mr. Fletcher, Mr. Holland, and others. Then followed the exhortation, which Mr. Culcheth gave from Colossians, iv., 17, *And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord that thou fulfil it*. So concluding with prayer, thanksgiving, singing, and pronouncing the benediction, the congregation were dismissed."

¹ Copied from "Nonconformity in Cheshire," p. 325.

In the Rev. Peter Walkden's Diary there are two or three interesting references to Mr. Pilkington and the Preston congregation of Dissenters. Under date May 2nd, 1725, the Diarist says: "At noon spoke to the petition of Preston congregation, and while the collection was we sung the 117th Psalm, and 3s. was collected." And again, on May 9th, Lord's Day, he says: "Then I catechised the lesser [children] to the 15th question, the elder to the 2nd, in Henry's Catechism. While we sung, 6s. 1d. was collected for Preston meeting-house." Mr. Dobson appropriately remarks upon this: "The Preston congregation must have been few in number and poor in purse to send for aid to Chipping and Newton."¹ Under date October 3rd, 1729, the Diarist again writes: "Rid direct to Crossmoor to Mr. Moss's quarters, and I put in my mare there; and Mr. Moss being somewhat better, he and I walked together to Elswick; the people being come, I went into the pulpit and prayed . . . and preached. . . . So I went with Mr. Moss, Mr. Pilkington, Thomas Davis, and some others, to a little house in the town end, and got some refreshments. I paid nothing, but came back to Mr. Moss's quarters, and got my coat and mare and came with Mr. Pilkington to the Stone Bridge, where we crossed, and found William Cardwell better. Mr. Pilkington prayed with him and for him, and we came thence, and at Broughton Four Lane Ends we parted each from other."² Mr. Pilkington continued minister of both Walton and Preston until about 1760, when he resigned through the growing infirmities of age. He died very shortly after. W. O. Pilkington, Esq., of Ashton, who died on October 10th, 1879, at the age of ninety-three years, and whose wife died the day before, aged sixty-three years, both of whom are interred in Ashton churchyard, claimed him as great uncle, and descendants are still in the neighbourhood. A diary kept by the Rev. John Pilkington is still in existence, and it is to be hoped that some member of the family will be induced to publish what will not only be interesting, but must throw considerable light upon the early history of Preston Dissent. Mr. Pilkington's successor at Preston was the Rev. Thomas Astley. He was born at Whitehaven, September, 5th, 1738, and was the son of the Rev. Ralph

¹ Peter Walkden's Diary, p. 16 and note.

² Ibid., p. 47.

Astley, a native of Chowbent. His grandmother was the daughter of William Chorley, of Preston, already named, consequently he was a near relative of the Rev. John Turner. Mr. Thomas Astley received his early education in the Grammar School at Whitehaven, then under the direction of the Rev. Mr. Hugglestone, a clergyman in the Established Church, and at the age of fifteen, in September, 1753, he was placed under the care of the Rev. James Daye, Dissenting minister at Lancaster. Eventually he was sent to Daventry Academy, and in July, 1758, was transferred to Warrington, and, on the completion of his college course, settled at Congleton, Cheshire, July, 1761. Owing to "many invitations and earnest solicitations to succeed his mother's uncle, the Rev. John Pilkington," at Preston, he removed to this place on the 4th of October following. He was ordained May 18th, 1762, at Warrington, when the Revs. J. Mottershead, J. Daye, and T. Braddock took part in the service. Mr. Astley remained in Preston until April, 1773, when he removed to Chesterfield, Derbyshire. In December, 1775, he married Phœbe, only daughter of Joseph Wilkinson, Esq., of Birmingham, by whom he had five sons and four daughters. In 1779 he was earnestly desired to accept the classical professorship of the Warrington Academy, but this he declined. He continued his ministrations at Chesterfield until the summer of 1813, when "the infirmities of age led him to resign," and on the morning of October 15th, 1817, he died, having completed his seventy-ninth year. His remains were interred in the vault belonging to his family in the north transept of the Parish Church at Chesterfield.¹ The following inscription appears upon a white mural tablet erected to his memory in the chapel:—

Sacred to the memory of the
REVEREND THOMAS ASTLEY,

The affectionate pastor of this congregation above forty years.

His excellent endowments, improved by education and study, joined to a peculiar amiableness of temper, and suavity of manners, endeared him to the remembrance of all who knew him. He was a sincere disciple of his Divine Master, whose revered example he uniformly endeavoured to imitate. In his public instructions he ever recommended and enforced the truest piety, humility, benevolence, and Christian charity: qualities for

¹ "Monthly Repository" for 1818, pp. 81, 155.

which his own character was in an eminent degree distinguished, both in public and in private life.

He died October xv., MDCCCXV11, aged LXXIX years ; and his remains are interred in the north transept of Chesterfield Church.

This tablet is inscribed by his widow as a grateful memorial of departed worth, to a kind husband, a tender father, an affectionate brother, and a faithful friend.

His son, the Rev. Richard Astley, as previously stated, was for some time at Rochdale, and for many years at Shrewsbury. The next minister was the Rev. Richard Bolton, who had previously laboured for a few years at Monton, near Manchester, and Rochdale. He began his Preston ministry in 1773 or 1774. In the baptismal register appears the name of Sophia, daughter of Richard and Alice Bolton, who was baptised November 13th, 1774 ; also that of Richard, a son, who was born "a little after 4 o'clock" in the evening, November 1st, 1779, and baptised on the 29th of that month. These, I imagine, were the minister's children. The same authority declares that "the above [several names are given] were baptised by the Rev. Richard Bolton." The date before this sentence is March 11th, 1781, hence it appears that Mr. Bolton was at Preston from about 1773 to 1781.¹ Another Preston minister was the Rev. John Cooke, M.D., admitted a student in the Daventry Academy in 1769. He was settled at Rochdale during the years 1776 to 1778. Whether before or after this he was at Preston is not certain, but his ministry was evidently short. After a few years he entered the medical profession, took his degree at Leyden, practised for some time in London, and was a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians.² The Rev. William Tattersall, M.D., another Daventry student, followed, though the exact date of his settlement is again uncertain. He signed the baptismal register March 3rd, 1782. He was for some time minister at Tewkesbury, and left Preston towards the end of 1788. He kept a school at Preston which was "frequented by the children of the principal families in

¹ I am persuaded the account in the text is the correct one, though Colonel Fishwick ("History of Rochdale") says that Mr. Bolton died at Rochdale in 1772, and a "History of Monton Chapel" says that he died in 1773.

² "Monthly Repository" for 1822, p. 196.

the vicinity."¹ Like his predecessor, he eventually quitted the ministry, and became an eminent physician in Liverpool and London.² The Rev. David Evans, a native of Glamorganshire, was the next minister. In 1778 he was admitted a student in Carmarthen College, under the care of the Rev. Dr. Jenkins. In the early part of 1785 he settled at Wirksworth, in Derbyshire, and about 1789 removed to Preston. After a ministry of about five years he removed to Bromsgrove, and thence, in 1798, to Plymouth Dock. At this place he died February 14, 1828, aged sixty-nine years.³ The Rev. Thomas Rees followed, and remained until the end of 1800, his successor being the Rev. William Manning Walker, who began his ministry in Preston in the year 1802. He was born at Yarmouth, in Norfolk, on the 16th of February, 1784, a student of the Manchester New College, and a nephew of the Rev. George Walker, Professor of Theology there from 1798 to 1803. During the last year of his college course he came to Preston to preach every other Sunday; and in the year 1803, when only in his twentieth year, began his regular ministry there. His views on the Trinity undergoing a change, Mr. Walker was obliged to retire from the Church Street congregation, preaching his farewell sermon on July 12, 1807. The sermon, which was afterwards published, was from Acts xx., 26, 27. A considerable portion of his congregation followed him, and a new and commodious chapel in Grimshaw Street was completed and opened for public worship on the 12th of April, 1808.⁴ On the 28th of June of that year he was ordained to the work of the ministry, when the following ministers took part:—The Revs. R. M. Miller, of Chorley, W. Roby, of Manchester, J. Grimshaw, of Forton, and Joseph Fletcher, of Blackburn.⁵ In 1812 he married Miss Agnes Paterson, of Walton. Mr. Walker resigned his charge at Grimshaw Street, and closed his ministry there on the 30th of December, 1821. Shortly after this he was invited to become the first resident minister of the General Burial Ground,

¹ "Monthly Repository" for 1852, p. 637.

² "Monthly Repository" for 1822, p. 197.

³ "Monthly Repository" for 1828, p. 419.

⁴ "Evangelical Magazine" for 1808, p. 318.

⁵ Ibid. p. 406.

Rusholme Road, Manchester. After eleven years' service in this character, preaching also on the Sabbath Day as opportunity served, Mr. Walker died—December 23, 1833—and was interred in the cemetery where he had so long officiated over the remains of others. He died "highly esteemed and beloved" by "a large and respectable circle of Christian friends."¹ On the departure of Mr. Walker the Unitarians elected as their minister the Rev. John Rudd. He had been trained at Manchester College, and for about eighteen months had laboured at Bury St. Edmunds, whence he came to Preston in 1809. He remained about three years. After his removal the chapel seems to have been closed for a time. In Mr. Wright's account of his missionary tour in the north-west is the following, dated December 2, 1812:—

"Preston—A minister is wanted in this place. The meeting-house had been shut up for nearly six months. I preached twice. The largest congregation consisted of about 150 persons."²

The Rev. Thomas Crompton Holland, another Manchester College student, followed in 1814. He left for Edinburgh in 1819, and after labouring there for three years removed to Loughborough, in Leicestershire, where he remained thirty years. He died suddenly at Oldham on the 9th of July, 1861, in the sixty-eighth year of his age. Mr. Holland whilst at Preston was one of the founders of the Freemason lodge. The Rev. Robert Cree comes next. He kept a private academy at the minister's house, in Church Street, and amongst his pupils was the late Alderman T. Miller, to whose munificence the town is indebted for its beautiful "Miller Park." Baines's Directory, published in 1825, gives the Rev. Robert Cree, Unitarian minister, as keeping a boarding and classical academy. He removed to Bridport in 1827, and was succeeded at Preston by the Rev. James Cowdan Wallace. His two brothers—Robert Wallace and Charles Wallace—were eminent Unitarian ministers. He remained only a short time in Preston, and died at Wareham, Dorset, March 17, 1841, where he had for some time been minister. In 1830 the Rev. Joseph Ashton became minister at

¹ "Evangelical Magazine" for 1834, pp. 441-447.

² "Monthly Repository" for 1813, p. 58.

Preston. He had been trained at the Manchester College; been minister at Dukinfield from 1814 to 1820; Knutsford, 1820-26; Halifax, 1826-28; Whitby, 1829-30. He is said to have been a ripe scholar, and continued to labour at Preston until 1856. His last entry in the baptismal register is dated October 1st, 1856. He died in 1864. He was followed by the Rev. W. C. Squier, whose ordination took place on Wednesday evening, February 10, 1858, when the Rev. Dr. Beard gave the charge to the minister. The services occupied nearly three hours. Mr. Squier was the son of an Essex minister, and intended originally for the medical profession. He afterwards entered the Home Missionary Institution, Manchester, and, as already stated, settled at Preston as Unitarian minister in 1858. During his residence here he took an active part in temperance work along with Mr. Joseph Livesey, and assisted in the formation of other philanthropic institutions. He remained at Preston for nine years, removing to Stand in April, 1867. Here he had charge of the Stand Grammar School also from 1872. Failing health compelled him to resign his charge in 1885, and the remainder of his days he spent in retirement at Ringley Brow, Stoneclough, near Farnworth. At this place he died on the 23rd of April, 1888, and was interred in the burial ground of Stand Unitarian Chapel, on Saturday, the 28th of April, in the fifty-seventh year of his age. Mr. Squier was succeeded at Preston by another Manchester College student in the person of the Rev. Robert John Orr, M.A. He was minister at Bridgwater for about twelve months, and came to Preston about June, 1867. He signed the Preston register for the last time on March 23rd, 1873, and is now at Belfast. The Rev. F. W. Walters, trained at Rawdon College and Edinburgh University, signed the register on February 8, 1874, as the minister at Preston. He left in 1877, and is now at Newcastle-on-Tyne. He preached a sermon at Preston on March 27th, 1881, afterwards published, entitled, "Carlyle: the Apostle of Faith." The Rev. J. G. Evans, M.A., comes next, signing the register on November 3rd, 1878. He was educated at Carmarthen and Owens Colleges, and is a noted Celtic scholar. He now resides at Oxford, without pastoral charge. His successor at Preston was the Rev. W. J. Taylor, trained at the Manchester Home Missionary Board. He left Preston in 1883, and is now

at Darwen. The Rev. W. Sharman, F.G.S., trained at the Methodist New Connexion College, entered upon duty here in 1884. He had previously laboured at the Unitarian Chapel, George Street, Aberdeen, and Chapel Lane, Bradford. In 1868 he went to America, and had charge of a congregation at Washington until April, 1875, when he settled at Plymouth, England. From this place he removed to Preston, where he remained until his death, on the 15th of November, 1889, at the age of forty-eight years. He was interred in the Preston Cemetery. The Rev. R. S. Clarke, of Moira, County Down, has just been appointed to the vacant pastorate. It is needless to say that the chapel is Unitarian, and has been for many years. It ought to be pointed out that the statement in Hewitson's recent "*History of Preston*" is perfectly gratuitous which says: "The doctrines professed were, at the beginning, of an Arian or Unitarian character, as they have been ever since." It has already been stated that the opinions of one of its earliest ministers, the Rev. John Turner, were Calvinistic, of the "most strict and rigid form;" also, that the Rev. John Pilkington at his ordination affirms the absolute Deity of Jesus, that He is co-essential and co-eternal with the Father; whilst there are indications from other sources that the Unitarianism of the place must have been a tolerably late development.

In bringing this account to a close it is only necessary to add a word or two further about the Dissenting interest at Walton. Sir Hy. Hoghton, in 1719, erected a new meeting-house for the Dissenters of Walton, conveying, in November 3, of that year, to Thomas Whalley, and others, in trust, "8 falls of land and a building lately erected, for a peppercorn rent." We have seen that it was worked in conjunction with the Preston Chapel, and that the Rev. John Pilkington was minister of both places until his retirement in 1760. A return of Dissenting Chapels in 1772 gives Walton as "Congregationalist," and notes: "Walton and Preston are the same congregation, meeting alternately at these two places under the care of the same minister, at present vacant."²* Some eighty years ago, the congregation, being small, became merged into the

¹ P. 516.

² "*History of Blackburn*" (Abram), p. 742.

* But Mr. Astley was minister at Preston in 1772

Preston Society, and the chapel was altered into cottages, the rents of which form part of the endowment of the Preston Chapel. The Walton Chapel as converted into cottages still exists. It stands back from the main street of the village in what is called Chapel Yard, is a three-storied brick building, long and narrow, with a very uninviting appearance, and has been made into six cottages. The graveyard once surrounding the chapel has disappeared, and the chapel itself seems as if it could not long survive the wear and tear of time.

III.—CANNON STREET CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

NEXT in point of time to the Nonconformist interest in Church Street, whose history has already been given, is what is now known as the Cannon Street Congregational Church. It will be, however, interesting to note that the Methodists, Baptists, and Congregationalists appear almost simultaneously in Preston. Methodism was introduced into the town about the year 1776, and in 1781 and 1784 the "devoted band of believers were delighted and edified by a visit" from John Wesley himself, who preached to a "serious congregation." The Baptists date the commencement of their interest from 1782, and the register of births begins in that year. Originally they met in Leeming Street; afterwards they worshipped for a little time in the Avenham Institute, and then the congregation erected the present capacious and beautiful edifice in Fishergate, which was opened July 1st, 1858. Considerable obscurity hangs over the origin of the Cannon Street Church. In the little work entitled "Independency in Preston," by the Rev. S. R. Antliff, the year 1772 is given as a probable date for its commencement, and the Rev. G. Burder, then said to be minister of High Street Chapel, Lancaster, is associated with it.¹ There is manifestly here some discrepancy, as the Rev. G. Burder in that year was following the profession of an artist in London, and did not come into Lancashire until 1777.² The "Congregational

¹ P. 2.

² "Memoirs of Rev. G. Burder," p. 45.

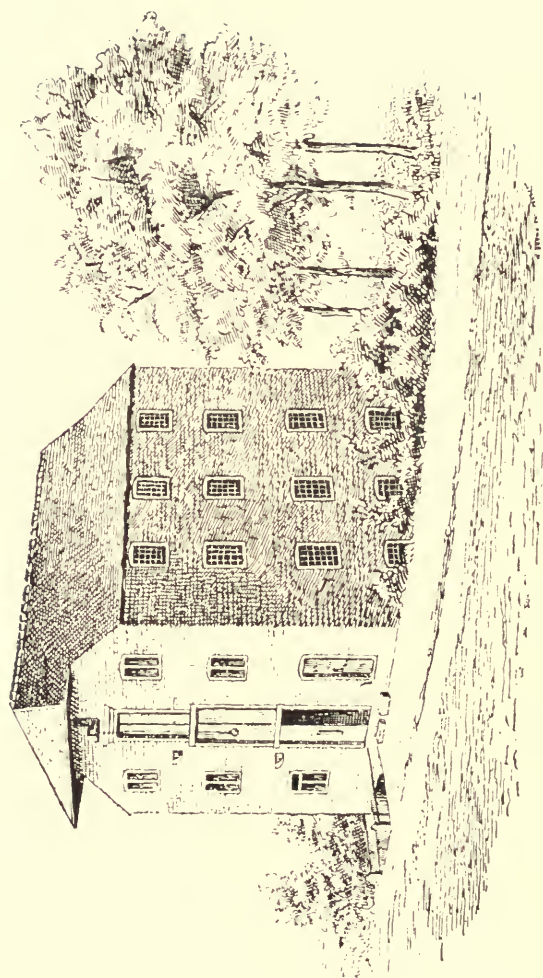
Year Book" gives 1780 as the date of the church's foundation, but the fact is, no certain date can be given. No records remain to say that on such a day, in such a month, in such a year, certain people hived off from some other people and founded this second Nonconformist interest in the town. Dr. Halley, in his "*Lancashire Nonconformity*," keeps clear of all dates—simply suggesting the "close of the last century"—and stating that it "originated in the labours of the Calvinistic Methodists."¹ It is, however, more likely that this church came into being in the same way as many another had done—that is, when Unitarianism began to show itself in the older interest in Church Street, some would be dissatisfied and seek a more congenial atmosphere elsewhere. There may have been no church as far back as 1772, but it is exceedingly likely that there were some for whom Unitarianism had no charms—the fathers of the Cannon Street Church—who were already worshipping, when, where, and how they deemed best. I venture to transcribe a passage from an interesting work on Fylde Methodism, by Mr. John Taylor, which bears upon the point just named: "When Roger Crane [one of the founders of Preston Methodism] was but a youth," says Mr. Taylor, "the Presbyterian Church in Preston had been cursed with a spirit of controversy that was agitating the town. Its minister seems to have lost his spirituality, and to have wandered away into the mazes of Humanitarianism and Unitarianism. Instead of proclaiming the great truths of the Gospel and allowing them to have their due influence on men's minds and hearts, he went hither and thither hunting Will-o'-the-wisps of idle theories and foolish speculations till he landed his church in quagmire and bog. Eventually he cast off all pretence of spirituality, and boldly proclaimed himself a high and dry Unitarian of the old school. By the weight of his personal influence he carried away some of the leading members of his church, and the trustees of the building in which they worshipped. Having the trustees on his side, he was enabled to defy his opponents, and continue in office long after he had ceased to preach the doctrines to which he was solemnly pledged. In the end the trustees betrayed their trust, and the chapel was handed over to the Unitarians. Roger Crane and his father were the leading opponents of the men

¹ Vol. ii., p. 467.

who betrayed the church. They resisted both by argument and personal influence every effort to rob the church of its spirituality, and so long as there was any hope of saving the sinking ship they stood by it. But when they found all their efforts were vain they deserted it, and left it to its fate, and the building is to this day used as the Unitarian Church in Preston."¹ It is a pity Mr. Taylor is not a little more minute. The date of the events he so vividly describes, and the name of the minister would have been important items of information. However, as Roger Crane was born in 1758, and a "youth" at the time of these theological upheavals, we may assume that the time was about the middle of the latter half of last century. Dissatisfied with the Unitarian tendencies of the congregation at Church Street, the few families who desired the Congregational form of church government would find material encouragement and help in the churches of the district outside the town. As we proceed we shall see the Independent churches at Forton, Garstang, and Elswick most intimately associated with Dissent in Preston in its early days. One of the first meeting places for these Preston Congregationalists was the old Cock Pit, situated in Back Lane. Mr. Antliff identifies this with a building which still stands, and is owned by Mr. G. Wentworth, basket maker. "Going from the Guild Hall," says he, "through one of the narrow streets leading from the Market Place to the Orchard, then passing the Orchard on the right, we come to a part of Back Lane which is one open space, a sort of irregular square, at the end of which the lane is greatly narrowed, having a small public-house, painted drab, on the right, and on the left an old structure of red brick, immediately adjoining Mr. Carr's corn warehouse. This is the old Cock Pit."² It has since been ascertained that this was not the Cock Pit, but a building lower down Back Lane, which is also still in existence. It is three-storied, besides the cellar, and is owned by Mr. Richardson, machine broker. It is quite as antique in appearance as its rival, and though now dark and dingy because hemmed in by buildings, a century ago it would be well lighted from the cellar to the roof. The district at that time was quite rural, as shown in the accompanying engraving. Stone steps, also leading

¹ "The Apostles of Fylde Methodism," pp. 21, 22.

² "Independency in Preston," p. 2.



THE OLD COCK PIT IN BACK LANE.

from the street into the cellar, show that it must have been used more frequently than cellars generally are. Through the kindness of Mr. Richardson I have been able to examine the deeds, some of which are very old, and from one dated February 2nd, 1798, the following extract is taken :—

“All that building or warehouse situate, standing and being on the south side of a certain street or lane within Preston afore-said, called the Back Lane, commonly called or known by the name of the new Cockpit, or by whatsoever other name, the same now is or heretofore hath been called or known, and which same building or warehouse was lately used as a cotton factory, and is now in the possession,” &c.

The same description appears in several of the documents, and in one dated 1776 it is styled the “new Cock Pit.” There can, therefore be no doubt that the building has been used for this amongst other purposes. This was the place where the early Independents of Preston were accustomed to worship, they occupying one of the upper rooms whilst the cockfighters had the lower room or cellar. The Rev. G. Burder is associated with the opening of this as a place of worship. He refers to it in the following terms :—“In the month of November [1778] I went to Preston, and took a large room (a warehouse) for a preaching place. After a few years a chapel was built and a church formed.”¹ The room was fitted up with forms, and an old pulpit from Forton, near Garstang, was procured ; and Mr. Burder and the Rev. Thos. Phillips, of Elswick, undertook to supply the pulpit once a week alternately. Respecting this primitive meeting-place in Back Lane, we have the following account :—

“At the first opening of the place there were present about one hundred by no means attentive hearers. Subsequently the regular congregation amounted to about fifty. The Word was not spoken in vain although its course was neither so free, nor its progress so rapid, as has sometimes been witnessed. In the course of about a year a church, consisting of about 12 members, was formed on

¹ “Memoirs of Rev. G. Burder,” p. 70.

the Independent principles of church government by the Rev. G. Burder."¹

Of these first twelve members of the church the name of one only has been preserved—Ann Pennington. From her Mr. Carnson collected the information to be found in his "Historical Notices." The Church Book states that she "died November 7, 1824, having been for 51 [?] years a consistent member of the church. She departed in the struggles of an apoplectic fit." In the memoirs of Mr. Burder, a curious story appears in connection with the friends in the Cock Pit, which is worth insertion. It is as follows:—

"[1781] A singular incident happened at Preston. The room we [Independents] occupied was over a cockpit, seldom used, but some players took it for performing in. It was settled between the principal player and me that we should not perform the same evening, as our people must of necessity pass through part of the theatre; but it so happened that a lady in the town ordered a play on a night which was our preaching night. Mr. Blackburn [then at South Cave, afterwards at Tockholes] came to preach, and began to sing. This disturbed the players below, who were performing 'Romeo and Juliet.' Romeo came up and expostulated. Our people were unwilling to give place; but Romeo threatened so violently, and with a drawn sword in his hand, that they felt constrained to yield and to give over the service."²

Tradition has varied the story somewhat by saying that there was a cock fight, a religious service, and a theatrical performance in the building at the same time. Mr. Carnson, in his notes, says:—

¹ "Brief Historical Notices Respecting the Church," prefixed to the Cannon Street Church Book. These were compiled by the Rev. D. T. Carnson, and are exceedingly valuable. Mr. Antliff in his "Independency in Preston" states that he has made large use of them, and the author of this work acknowledges his indebtedness unto them. It should, however, be stated that in the matter of dates they are not always accurate; and no wonder, if we remember that Mr. Carnson had no documents of any kind to fall back upon.

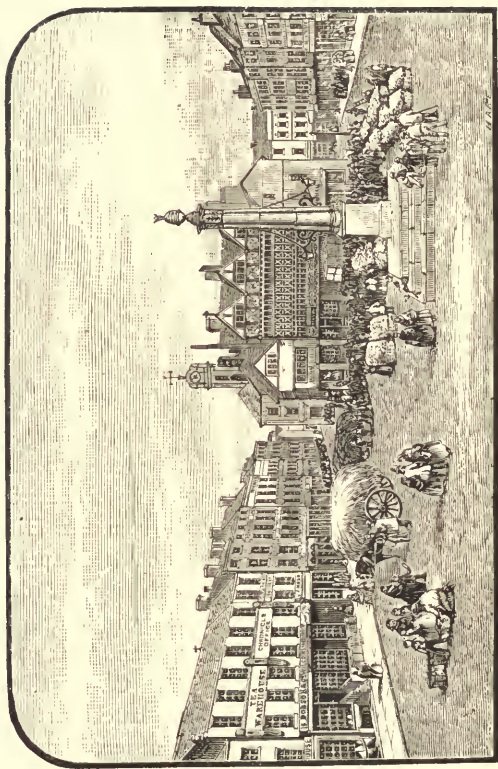
² "Memoirs of Rev. G. Burder," p. 97.

"Then Preston was connected with Forton, near Garstang. A Mr. Hill, whose character is mentioned with respect, became Pastor of both places. How long he continued in this situation, and the circumstances which led to his removal cannot now be ascertained. After sometime, however, he left and went into some place in Yorkshire. He was succeeded at both Forton and Preston by one Mr. Richardson, who continued with them about two years. The above were all the ministers regularly settled over the church during its continuance in the Cock Pit, which was about seven years."

The Rev. John Hill,¹ one of these early workers in the Cock Pit, was a native of London, born in 1753, and brought up by his parents in the Established Church. Eventually, however, he was led to cast in his lot with the Dissenters, and was trained by the Revs. Joseph Barber, Samuel Brewer, and John Kello, in what afterwards came to be known as Highbury College. On the completion of his studies, about 1780 or 1781 he settled at Preston, and remained only about a year. His biographer states that he preached part of that time at Elswick. Herein he differs from Mr. Carnson, who says that he was minister at Forton. In the absence of documentary evidence the point will have to be left in doubt—all that is clear is that at this time Preston was closely associated both with Forton, Elswick, and Garstang. From Preston Mr. Hill moved to Haslingden, and thence to Lady Glenorchy's Chapel, Annetwell Street, Carlisle, in 1787.² In the Church Book of the Lowther Street Congregational Church is the following entry, dated Feb. 23, 1787 :—"The Revd. John Hill came and took upon him the charge of our souls under the Lord Jesus Christ, the great and glorious Head of the Church." In the latter part of 1790 he removed to Ravenstonedale, where he ministered until his death. The following entry appears in the Ravenstonedale Congregational Church Book :—"The Revd. John Hill, for nearly 20 years pastor of the Protestant Dissenting Church, Ravenstonedale,

¹ "Evangelical Magazine" for 1810. p. 236.

² "Memorials of Lowther Street Congregational Church, Carlisle," by Rev. John Thomas. pp. 13, 15. Cp. also "Historical Sketch of the Haslingden Congregational Church," by Rev. J. H. Johnes.



PRESTON OLD MARKET PLACE.

Westmorland, departed this life Novr. 26th, 1809.”¹ The Rev. George Richardson followed Mr. Hill, but of him there is no information beyond the fact that for a short time he was minister at Garstang. If Preston was united with Forton, as stated by Mr. Carnson, the union must have been of short duration, for in 1782 the Rev. James Grimshaw became minister of Forton, and there is no mention of him in connection with Preston. About the year 1784 the friends moved from the Cock Pit to a room in the “Strait Shambles.” Mr. Carnson’s account of this matter is interesting, and worth giving in full. He says :—

“About this time a Mr. Light,² a hearer in the Cock Pit, occupied a room in the strait shambles as a school-room. He informed the people with whom he was connected, if they would leave the Cock Pit, they should have his schoolroom for the purpose of conducting their worship. Thinking this place much more eligible, they cheerfully accepted his invitation, and immediately removed the forms, pulpit, &c., to Mr. Light’s room. The place was supplied pretty regularly by the neighbouring ministers, and a common degree of prosperity crowned their labours for about two years. Then happened a gloomy reverse, occasioning in the minds of Christ’s disciples here no ordinary anxiety. Mr. Light’s private affairs became embarrassed, the goods in his room were seized, and both forms and pulpit were sold at the cross in the market-place. This disastrous occurrence gave the cause a severe shock by opening the mouths of the enemies to blaspheme, and weakening the hands of religious friends. For a time the people were left altogether without the administration of divine ordinances. Preaching was totally suspended.”

To the kindness of Lady Huntingdon the Congregationalists of Preston are deeply indebted. During a considerable time she paid the whole expenses of preaching, and at this moment of trial rendered timely help. It is said that she took a “lively interest in

¹ “History and Traditions of Ravenstonedale,” by Rev. W. Nicholls. p. 83.

² In the Baptismal Register of the Unitarian Chapel, Church Street, is an account of moneys paid for various purposes, amongst which is the following: “[1784] Nov. 22. Mr. Light for children’s schooling.”

the spiritual welfare of this little scattered flock." "Immediately," says Mr. Carnson, "she wrote to a Mr. Aspin [Dr. Halley says Aspinwall], then in Wales, to repair with all speed to Preston in Lancashire, for the people there are perishing for lack of knowledge." Accordingly he came to Preston about 1786-7, and took charge of the church. He remained here but a short time, death carrying him away "from the fold below to that above"; but whilst here he filled his station "with honour to himself and with satisfaction to his hearers." He was interred at St. Helens, near Liverpool, and, says Mr. Carnson, "the eulogy pronounced upon him by the old disciple before mentioned [Ann Pennington] is as excellent as it was heartfelt—'he was a good man and died in faith.'" A Mr. Main, from Scotland, succeeded Mr. Aspin. He was ordained in the Baptist Chapel, then in Leeming Street. Mr. Main's stay in Preston was short, and he is said to have gone to Manchester. There was a Rev. William Main, or Maine, at Eastwood, in Yorkshire, in 1787, and at Holcombe, near Ramsbottom, in 1788. But whether the same or not I do not know, though the date given makes it quite probable. The next minister was the Rev. T. Carter, and now we come to more solid ground. Mr. Carter first appears as minister of a small church near Dover, which "being involved in debt by the erection of a new chapel, it was proposed to him to go round the country to endeavour to raise contributions to discharge it." He left his family and home in June, 1788, on this begging expedition, and, after visiting several counties, was invited into Lancashire. On coming to Preston, he was strongly solicited to take up his residence here, and his biographer says:—"After preaching a considerable time on trial, and the Lord appearing to bless his labours, though his salary was very small, he consented to their request." In October, 1789, he brought his family to Preston, and in the following year "the people erected a small chapel, which was opened in June, 1790." The following note in Mr. Carnson's handwriting relates to the registering of this early Independent Chapel:—"August 28th, 1790—Application to the Bishop of Chester to register as a place of public worship a chapel, newly-erected, situated on the south side of Fishergate, in the town of Preston, &c. Oct. 1790. Registered in the Episcopal Registry at Chester, &c. Signed, Will Nicholls, D. Regr." The new chape

referred to was in Fishergate, and a Mr. McCandlish is named as one who put forth "strenuous exertions" in the way of getting funds for its erection. Mention has already been made of the Rev. T. Phillips, of Elswick, giving help to the Preston Congregationalists ; and a Mr. Bamber, of Great Eccleston, member and deacon of that church, is associated with Mr. McCandlish in his efforts to erect the first Congregational place of worship in Preston. It is interesting to note that Mr. Bamber defrayed the expenses of training several young men for the ministry, amongst them being the Revs. Gabriel and Joseph Croft, two brothers. Mr. Carter was ordained to the ministry in September, 1790, when, amongst other ministers who took part in the services, were the Revs. James McQuhae, of Blackburn, and S. Bradbury, of Manchester. Dr. Halley states that Mr. Carter's predecessor, Mr. Aspinwall (Aspin) "conducted religious services according to the forms and in the habiliments (or something like them) of the clergy of the Church of England."¹ But respecting Mr. Carter, he says that he desisted from reading the liturgy, dispensed with the clerical robes, and associated in religious services with the regular Nonconformists of the county. "Preston," says his biographer, "was a school of affliction and instruction to him. After the loss of two children, he was visited with a very painful illness of several weeks, and soon after this with the death of Mrs. Carter in May [should be July 2], 1793. During these trials, however, he was graciously supported by the promises of the Covenant, which afforded him strong consolation in the midst of deep affliction. Still it pleased the Lord to try him in the December following with a farther loss, which was that of another of his children, particularly promising and engaging. In October, 1794, he was brought very low with a pleurisy, but his support under it was such as to enable him to rejoice in the midst of tribulation."² Mr. Carnson says that under his ministry "the congregations were fluctuating and the church did not much increase." Nor need this excite within us surprise, when we remember how chequered and sad his domestic life was. He resigned his charge at Preston in the early part of 1795, and was employed as an itinerant preacher in different parts of England by

¹ "Lancashire Puritanism and Nonconformity," vol. ii., p. 467.

² "Evangelical Magazine" for 1798. p. 442.

Lady Anne Erskine. The last scene of his labours in this capacity was Hull, where he died from inflammation on March 8th, 1798, his remains being interred in the chapel where he had ministered, and his funeral sermon preached by Mr. Lambert, of Hull. In the "Evangelical Magazine" for 1798 is an interesting sketch of this good man's life, from which the above particulars have been extracted. In the same volume is a hymn on "Christian Friendship," composed by him whilst at Hull. In the same magazine, also for 1793, is a short obituary notice of Mrs. Carter, who at the time of her death is said to have been in the thirty-second year of her age; also some account of his early life and conversion from Mr. Carter's own pen, under the pseudonym of "Philolathes." For the next few years the church was supplied principally by young men trained by the Rev. James McQuhae, of Blackburn. The Rev. William Morgan is named as the next minister at Preston, beginning duty here as such about April, 1798. His name appears in the document drawn up in 1806 by such Congregational ministers in Lancashire as signified their approval of the formation of what is now known as the County Union. He left Preston in 1810, and was followed by the Rev. Eli Chadwick. Dr. Halley says that he was a Rotherham student, but his name does not appear in the reports of that institution. The exact date of his ministerial settlement at Preston is not known, but he signs the baptismal register for the first time on May 17th, 1812, and his ordination service took place on September 28th, 1814. The following is an account of the service:—"Sept. 28, 1814, the Rev. E. Chadwick was ordained to the pastoral office over the Independent Church, Friargate [Fishergate], Preston. Mr. Walker, of Preston, read the Scriptures and prayed; Mr. Hacking, of Darwen, delivered the introductory discourse, &c.; Mr. Redmayn, of Horwich, offered up the ordination prayer; Mr. Ely, of Bury, gave the charge from 2 Tim., iv., 5, 'Make full proof of thy ministry:' Mr. Blake, of Darwen, preached to the people from 3 Peter, iii., 1, 'I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance;' Mr. Richards, of Waikerfold, concluded; Mr. Harris, of Bury, preached in the evening; and Mr. Fletcher, of Blackburn, the evening preceding." It appears to have been common in those early times

¹ "Evangelical Magazine" for 1815, p. 163.

for ministers to teach schools as well as attend to their pastoral duties. In the last article it was shown that the Rev. Robert Cree, minister of the Unitarian Chapel, Church Street, kept a private academy, and Mr. Chadwick did the same, as the following notice culled from a local paper, shows:—"The Rev. F. Chadwick's Seminary will re-open on Monday, the 22nd July. E. C. has a few vacancies for Boarders and Day Boarders; but he cannot at present receive any increase of Day Scholars.—Church Street, Preston, June 28. 1816."¹ Mr. Chadwick remained in Preston until 1820, when he emigrated to Canada.² His successor was the Rev. David Thompson Carnson. He was the grandson of the Rev. Andrew Carnson, Congregational minister in Scotland, was born on September 5th, 1796, at Cummer Trees, Dumfries, and entered the Blackburn Academy in 1817, at that time under the presidency of the Rev. Joseph Fletcher, M.A., D.D. His name appears first on the roll of students who rejoice in being able to claim the Lancashire College as their *alma mater*, the present noble collegiate institution at Manchester being but the offspring and development of the less pretentious one at Blackburn. During the midsummer of 1820 Mr. Carnson, at that time a student, visited Preston, and supplied for two or three Sundays. The result was a cordial invitation to come as stated pastor. The "call" is dated September 29th, 1820, and to it are appended the signatures of some thirty-six members and seatholders, together with the contributions promised, which amounted to the sum of £17 11s. quarterly, or a little over £70 per year. Not a large ministerial stipend, and yet not an inconsiderable sum for so small a people to raise. Mr. Carnson's reply, accepting the invitation, is dated October 26th, of the same year. On the 8th of November, 1821, his ordination took place, and Grimshaw Street Chapel being larger than that in Fishergate, was borrowed for the occasion. The following is an account of this early ordination service in Preston:—"Nov. 8th, 1821. Mr. D. T. Carnson (late student at

¹ *Preston Chronicle*, July 6th, 1816.

² The Rev. John Winder, in a letter dated September 11th, 1841, says that Mr. Chadwick gave up his school in Preston to a Mr. Hope, afterwards tutor at Lewisham, and went to America; that he returned dissatisfied, and again went back, being quite young when he first left England.

Blackburn Academy) was ordained over the Congregational Church, Fishergate Chapel, Preston, Lancashire. Mr. Walker, of Preston, commenced the service ; Mr. Roby, of Manchester, delivered the introductory discourse ; Mr. A. Carnson, of Cotherstone, offered the ordination prayer ; Mr. Fletcher, Theological Tutor of Blackburn Academy, gave the charge from 2 Tim. vi., 20 ; and Mr. Hacking, of Pole Lane, Darwen, concluded. The services were held in Grimshaw Street Chapel, which was kindly lent on the occasion. The service in the evening was begun by Mr. Edwards, of Elswick ; Dr. Raffles, of Liverpool, preached to the people from Ezra x., 4 ; and Mr. Griffiths, of Kirkham, concluded with prayer."¹ Mr. Carnson's ministry soon began to tell upon the town, for in April, 1824, it is resolved :—"That as there has been for some time past a want of room in this chapel to accommodate persons applying for seats ; as there are no free sittings for those whose pecuniary circumstances disable them from paying for sittings, and as some degree of inconvenience has been felt even in the most comfortable pews, it is the opinion of this meeting that a larger place of worship is exceedingly desirable."² A committee of twelve was appointed from the church and congregation to make enquiries as to what had best be done, and at their meeting May 3rd, 1824, on hearing the wishes of the church, they agreed, "That it is not desirable to enlarge the present chapel, for the following reasons :—First, the situation being so near a public street as to occasion great disturbance to public worship ; and, second, that in the event of an enlargement to the full extent of the land and accommodation arising from such enlargement would not be adequate to the extent incurred."³ The building was eventually sold and a new one erected in Cannon Street. A part of the old chapel still remains, and recently was occupied by Messrs. Rushton and Livesey, accountants. The Fishergate Chapel was "made of brick. There was a small graveyard connected with it. The principal portion of the burial ground was in front of the building, facing Chapel Street. A strip of the ground, about two yards wide, ran along the northern side, facing Fishergate, where,

¹ "Evangelical Magazine" for 1822. p. 158.

² Church Book.

³ Ibid.

as well as opposite Chapel Street, there was a boundary or protecting rail. The old chapel was purchased by Mr. Robert Friend, a member of the Preston Corporation and a woollen draper in the town. After standing empty for several years it was made into an office, and occupied by Mr. John Woodburn, solicitor. At a later period it was transformed into shops. The whole of it, with additions at the eastern end, is now occupied as shops, offices, &c. After the chapel was done away with the contents of some of the graves were removed by relatives or friends, and re-interred elsewhere. A few years ago, while certain additions or alterations were being made, human remains and pieces of coffins were found in the ground. The boundary rail on the north side of the ground was in a line with the posts now in front of the fish shop at the corner of the street.”¹

The foundation stone of the new place of worship at the bottom of Cannon Street was laid on Thursday, August 4th, 1825, by the Rev. George Greatbatch, of North Meols, who, in his address on the occasion, expressed the hope that the “true Gospel might be constantly proclaimed within the walls of the intended structure.”² It was opened on July 9th, 1826, and the following, again from the “Evangelical Magazine” for that year, is an account of the opening services and the building:—“July 9th. A new Independent Chapel, measuring 60 feet by 54, situate in Cannon Street, Preston, was opened for public worship. The Rev. R. S. M’All, of Macclesfield, preached in the morning and evening of the Lord’s Day. On Monday evening the Rev. J. Ely, of Rochdale, preached. The devotional parts of the service were conducted by Rev. R. Slate, of Grimshaw Street, Preston, and Rev. R. M. Griffiths, of Kirkham. Collections made after the services amounted to forty-three pounds. The above chapel has been erected for the accommodation of the church and congregation formerly assembling in Fishergate Chapel, which for some time past was unable not only to afford pews to accommodate such as applied for them, but even to accommodate the scholars of the Sunday schools connected with the place. Notwithstanding the great exertions of the church and congregation, a considerable debt remains upon the place, to liquidate a

¹ “History of Preston” (Hewitson), p. 529 (note).

² *Preston Chronicle*, August 6th, 1825.

part of which an appeal must be made to the benevolence of the Christian public."¹ The following is a copy of the circular issued soliciting help from the outside public :—

Preston, 1828.

We, the Church and congregation of the Independent denomination late worshipping in Fishergate, Preston, now in Cannon Street, hereby take the liberty of laying our case before the religious public.

Preston, in the county of Lancaster, is a Corporate town containing by the census of 1821 about 25,000 inhabitants; since that period the population has increased to upwards of 30,000. Of this number about one-third consists of Roman Catholics.

Between 50 and 60 years ago the Gospel began to be preached in this town in connection with Dissenters by Captain Scott. The Rev. George Burder, then of Lancaster, now of London, along with some neighbouring ministers, afterwards visited Preston, and for want of better accommodation preached in the Cockpit. About 36 years ago, after various vicissitudes, the chapel in Fishergate, which we lately occupied, was built. It was capable of containing about 250 hearers. No need, however, was felt of a larger place until the year 1822 or 1823. By the blessing of God upon the labours of our pastor, the Rev. D. T. Carnson, the place became too small for the congregation. After erecting a gallery and converting every place into sittings only about 300 hearers could be accommodated. For about 18 months we were unable to meet one of the applications made for pews. We had only four small inconvenient rooms for a Sunday School, and the scholars could not attend public worship for want of room in the chapel. Under these circumstances, although few in number, we considered it to be our bounden duty in furtherance of the Redeemer's kingdom to attempt a larger place.

We have accordingly built a commodious and substantial chapel in Cannon Street, capable of seating about 1,000 persons, with a Sunday School underneath the whole area of the building, capable of containing 700 children. This chapel, together with the land on which it stands, cost about £2,500, and was opened for public worship on the 9th and 10th July, 1826, by the Rev. R. S. M'All. The times and circumstances of our little number considered, we hope the amount subscribed, viz., £600, will prove that we have not been backward.

The sale of the old chapel, after the payment of a debt that was upon it, produced £291. Since the chapel was opened, it, together with all the premises thereunto belonging, has been regularly invested in twenty-one trustees for the use of the Pædo-Baptist Calvinistic Independents. The deed was drawn by Geo. Hadfield, Esq^{re}, of Manchester, and has been regularly enrolled in the High Court of Chancery, according to the statutes. Owing to exertions connected with the general interests of religion, no anniversary was held the first year after the opening of the chapel. On the

¹ P 436.

27th of July, 1828, two anniversary sermons were preached by the Rev. R. W. Hamilton, of Leeds, and a collection made after each sermon to aid in liquidating the debt, the amount of the public collection was £17 2s. 2d. After the collection a few members of the Church and congregation made up the collection to £125 8s. 8d., leaving a debt of £1,600 still to liquidate. This heavy debt is a great impediment to our exertions. Its reduction to about £1,000 would enable us to support it without any external aid. Weekly and annual subscriptions are regularly collected among ourselves. In addition to our own most strenuous exertions, necessity impels us to look for foreign assistance. We, therefore, in the name of the Great Head of the Church, humbly make this appeal to the liberality of the religious public.

Signed in the name and in the behalf of the Church and congregation,

JAMES WEALL,	} DEACONS.
GEO. LIDDELL,	
THOS. BREWER,	
MOSES HOGHTON.	

What sort of response the appeal met with from the public I have no means of knowing, but the debt continued to be oppressive, and the builders and contractor pressed for payment. The trustees, therefore, proposed to the church that a mortgage of £1,000 should be raised upon the building, but the church suggested that an effort should be made at once to raise the £1,000 by subscription. This was in 1830; and to encourage and stimulate the others a Mr. Bell, whose name frequently appears in the early records of the place as a most liberal supporter, promised £300 if the other could be obtained by the end of March in next year. The effort was made, and was successful. Below is a copy of the document, containing the names of the subscribers, with the amounts. It will be interesting not only to the members of the Cannon Street Church, who will recognise the names of their fathers and grandfathers therein, but to the Nonconformists of the town generally. It shows that the founders of the church were not wanting either in promptitude or in the spirit of sacrifice. They were Nonconformists, and were willing to pay for being such—and pay heavily—for it must be remembered that money, sixty years ago, was much more valuable than it is to-day. The subscriptions do not quite reach the thousand, but at a meeting of the subscribers on April 1st, 1831, it was agreed that the amount be made up amongst themselves. The document bears date March, 1831, and is as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
J. Bell...	300	0	0
— Bowman	50	0	0
Jas. Irving.....	50	0	0
Jas. Hogg	50	0	0
And. Irving	20	0	0
Jas. Weall	10	0	0
[S. P.] Redmayne.....	10	0	0
Jas. Lawson	10	0	0
Jas. Mc.Kune	10	0	0
Jno. Chambers	10	0	0
Geo. Liddel ..	10	0	0
T. Mc. Guffog	10	0	0
J. Mc.Dougall	10	0	0
J. Moffat.....	20	0	0
P. Irving.....	10	0	0
Jas. Charters.....	10	0	0
T. Glendinning.....	10	0	0
Geo. Weall.....	10	0	0
Mos. Hoghton	10	0	0
E. M'Kenzie	10	0	0
Mrs. M'Candlish	10	0	0
J. Dalgleish	10	0	0
Mrs. Walker	10	0	0
J. Stevenson	10	0	0
S. Horrocks and Co. ...	10	0	0
Rich. Walton.....	10	0	0
Horrocks and Jackson...	10	0	0
Jno. Armstrong.....	5	0	0
Clayton and Co.	5	0	0
Geo. Hill	2	0	0
Mr. Leach.....	2	0	0
Mrs. Greenhow.....	2	0	0
Jno. Hamer	5	0	0
Jno. M'Kay	2	0	0
Jno. Daggers.....	5	5	0
Wm. Scott.....	5	5	0
Jno. Charters	5	5	0
Jno. Patterson	5	5	0
Jos. Hargreaves	3	0	0
Jno. Hamilton	5	0	0
Wm. Mc'Kune	5	0	0
Ben. Smith.....	2	2	0
Jas. Burnet.....	2	0	0
Jno. Wilson	1	0	0
Chas. Main	1	0	0
Thos. Brewer	5	5	0
Jas. Newsham	3	0	0
Jno. Law, Esq.	3	3	0

	£	s.	d.
Wm. Leighton, Esq.....	2	0	0
Mr. Hudson	1	1	0
Mr. Hincksman	1	1	0
Messrs. Howards.....	1	0	0
Mrs. Doct. Law.....	0	10	0
Jno. Park	0	10	0
Mr. Turner	1	0	0
Mr. Parkinson	0	4	0
Jno. Hargreaves	0	10	0
Mr. Pendlebury ..	0	5	0
Mr. Wainman	1	0	0
A Friend	1	0	0
Messrs. Fisher.....	1	0	0
Wm. Mc.Gowan	1	0	0
John Smith	1	0	0
Thomas Little	1	0	0
Mr. Lythgoe	1	0	0
John Harrison	2	0	0
Thos. Lowe	1	0	0
2 Friends	0	7	0
2 do.	0	11	0
Ra. Alderson.....	0	5	0
Winstanley	2	0	0
Mr. Higgins	0	10	0
E. & J. Watterworth ...	1	5	0
Henry Cross	1	0	0
Mr. Haydock..	1	0	0
Doct. Brown	1	1	0
A Friend.....	0	3	0
Mrs. Threlfall	0	10	0
Miss Humphreys	0	2	6
Mr. Ladyman.....	0	10	0
Mr. Dillworth	1	0	0
E. Bryning.....	10	0	0
R. Spencer.....	1	0	0
Miss Pincock.....	0	5	0
Doct. Monk	1	0	0
Mr. Jones	3	3	0
Isaac Wilcockson.....	1	0	0
A Friend	0	10	0
T. and J. Barker	2	0	0
Thos. Jump	1	0	0
Clayton and Co. ...	2	2	0
Jno. Bell..	2	0	0
Mr. Gabbott	1	0	0
Mr. Carnson[Collect.by]	69	5	0

Total £917 0 6

Whilst at Preston, Mr. Carnson for several years served the County Union as District Secretary,^f and was one of the founders of the Lancashire Ministerial Provident Society. The records of the church he kept with the greatest exactness, and it is to his persevering labours that we are indebted for our knowledge of the early history of the church. In addition to his labours at Preston, Mr. Carnson appears to have held services out at Longton, as the following certificate granted for the purpose testifies :—

To the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Chester, and to his Registrar.

I, David Thompson Carnson, of Preston, in the County of Lancaster, do hereby certify that a certain dwelling-house and premises occupied by Robert Wilson, weaver, situate in the township of Longton, and in the parish of Penwortham, in the said county and diocese, is intended forthwith to be used as a place of religious worship, by an assembly or congregation of Protestants of the denomination of Independents. And I do hereby require you to register and record the same, according to the provisions of an Act of Parliament passed in the fifty-second year of the reign of his late Majesty King George the Third, intituled, "An Act to repeal certain Acts and amend other Acts relating to Religious Worship and Assemblies, and persons preaching and teaching therein." And hereby request a certificate thereof. Witness my hand this twenty-sixth day of March, 1833.

D. T. CARNSON.

I, William Ward, Deputy Registrar of the Court of the Bishop of Chester, do hereby certify that a certificate, of which the above is a true copy, was this day delivered to me, to be registered and recorded pursuant to the Act of Parliament therein mentioned. Dated this 29th day of March, 1833.

WM. WARD, Deputy Registrar.

After a twenty-seven years' successful ministry at Preston, Mr. Carnson resigned on August 5th, 1847 ; he continued, however, to preside at the meetings of the church until the end of the year. On June 29th, 1848, he and his daughter were transferred to the Zion Congregational Church, Manchester, under the pastoral care of the Rev. James Gwyther. In December, 1853, Mr. Carnson became pastor of the church at Halesworth, Suffolk, where he remained for ten years. Failing health led now to his retirement from the ministry, and the remainder of his days he spent at Knowle Green, near Preston. His end came suddenly on the 28th of May, 1877, when he was in his eighty-first year. His remains were laid

in the cemetery at Knowle Green, and his funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. H. J. Martyn, the Cannon Street minister. Mr. Carnson's daughter survives him, and is now one of the older members of the Cannon Street Church, towards the making of which her honoured father did so much. The Rev. James Spence, M.A., began his ministry at Preston on the 18th of June, 1848. He had been trained partly at Aberdeen and partly at Highbury College, London, and took as his first charge the Congregational Church in Oxford. Thence he removed to Preston, as already stated, in 1848. His ministry here was strikingly successful, and at an adjourned meeting of the church, held November 6th, 1851, the following resolution was passed:—"That, looking at the increase and progress of our congregation, and the difficulty there

in meeting the wants of those desirous of taking pews, this church is of opinion that immediate steps ought to be taken for securing increased accommodation, either by the enlargement of our present chapel, or by the building of a new one in some other part of the town." The "increased accommodation" took the form of an enlargement of Cannon Street Chapel, and the following passage will give a fair idea of the extent of the alterations made:—"The former building before alteration was 60ft. square; it has been lengthened by about 30ft. The first chapel was erected in 1825 and 1826, at a cost of about £3,500, and was capable of holding 800 adults and 200 children; the enlargement will enable it to hold 1,100 adults and 250 children, at an extra cost of £1,600. A light and elegant pulpit, erected in Dantzic oak, occupying less space than the former one, is erected. A new gallery front, combining simplicity of design and boldness of appearance, is also substituted. It is carried on new fluted pillars finished in bronze with gilt capitals. An extra entrance to the chapel is obtained from Cross Street. This also serves for access to the vestry, now on the chapel floor, which was formerly on the basement. Extra classrooms and better accommodation for the Sunday school, with better lights, are obtained by the extension in the cellar. A mode of lighting novel in Preston is introduced with advantage into the ceiling. Two large, handsome centrepieces contain each a 'Sun-light,' consisting of seven stars each, with nine radiating bat-wing burners, that diffuse an agreeable subdued light over the whole of

the galleries and nave of the chapel. Under the galleries are short but neatly-fitted pendants. The 'Sunlight' affords one of the best devised means of ventilation, whilst the chapel is lighted. The exhausted air of the room is made to steam upon the tubes, which convey the smoke from the gas, at the same time keeping the tubes cool. The alterations were commenced on the 18th May, 1852, and completed on the 12th October inst. The contractor for the works is Mr. Richard Aughton, jun. ; the painting and decorating of the chapel by Mr. James Walmsley ; and the plaster work by Mr. George Swarbrick ; the gas fittings by Mr. Chetham. The committee entrusted the carrying out of their plans to Mr. Veevers, of the firm of Messrs. Myres and Veevers. The original chapel was free from debt, and after the present services it is anticipated that the debt incurred by the enlargement will be reduced below £400."¹

The re-opening services took place on Wednesday, October 13th, 1852, when the Rev. Dr. Raffles preached in the morning from Eph. iii., 8. In the afternoon there was a magnificent dinner, at three o'clock, at the Red Lion Hotel, when amongst those present were—Revs. R. Spence, M.A., Liverpool, brother of Mr. Spence, the Cannon Street minister ; A. Frazer, M.A., of Blackburn ; R. Best, of Bolton ; J. Bliss, of Leyland ; R. M. Griffiths, then at Blackpool ; D. B. MacKenzie, of Fleetwood ; and J. Armitage, Elswick. Collections for the day amounted to £80 17s. 3d.

Before Mr. Spence had been in Preston long, several other churches sought his services. From Walworth, Grosvenor Street (Manchester), Glasgow, and Poultry Chapel (London), came pressing invitations; but so happy were the relations between himself and people, and so manifestly successful his labours at Preston, that nothing could draw him away. Eventually, however, he yielded to the solicitations of the Poultry Church, and resigned the charge of the Cannon Street Church on the 29th of March, 1854. At London, his popularity and usefulness were continued. Two years after leaving Preston the University of Aberdeen conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. In 1867 he felt the demands of his important church to be too great for his failing health, and so resigned ; but he took charge of the Old Gravel Pit

¹ *Preston Guardian*, October 16th, 1852.

Meeting House, Hackney—now Clapton Park. Heart disease and paralysis brought about his retirement from the ministry in August, 1870. He died February 28th, 1876, and was interred at Abney Park. For many years Dr. Spence edited the "Evangelical Magazine," and in many other ways he wielded a most prolific pen. Whilst at Preston he published "The Religion for Mankind;" and at London, amongst others, he issued the following works:—"Pastor's Prayers for the People's Weal," "Scenes in the Life of St. Peter," "Martha Dryland; or, Strength in Quietness," "Sunday Mornings with my Flock on St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians." It may be safely said that amongst the varied ministers who have laboured at Preston, none has left a better name and a more worthy record of Christian work than Dr. Spence. The next of the Cannon Street ministers was the Rev. Thomas Davies. He was trained at Highbury, and began ministerial work in 1844 at Maidenhead, Berkshire. Thence he removed to London, and in January, 1855, began his ministry at Preston. Some differences led to his resignation in 1860, and to the secession of a considerable number of members from the Cannon Street Church. These eventually became the third Congregational church in the town, now worshipping in Lancaster Road Chapel. Mr. Davies was desired to become their first pastor, but he removed to Darwen to take charge of the Duckworth Street Congregational Church. After an honourable ministry there of over twenty-one years he retired, and now resides in London without pastoral charge. His son, Mr. E. M. Davies, still lives in Darwen, and this year holds the position of Mayor. Mr. Davies's successor at Cannon Street was the Rev. Andrew Reed, B.A., of Edinburgh. He entered upon duty in Preston with the commencement of the year 1861. Failing health brought about his resignation in September, 1863. He removed to St. Leonard's-on-the-Sea, where he continued labouring until 1881. He now resides in London, without pastoral charge, having seen nearly fifty years of ministerial life. Tender memories gather round his name, and long will, because of his work in the town during the terrible cotton panic. The Rev. Henry Julius Martyn was Mr. Reed's successor at Preston. He was trained at Cheshunt, leaving there in 1860 to take charge of the Congregational Church at Newport, Isle of Wight. He began

his duties at Cannon Street in January, 1864. Mr. Martyn was an able lecturer, an effective public speaker, and a powerful controversialist. He issued in pamphlet form a series of letters that passed between himself and Father Bilsborrow, of New House, near Preston, in the *Preston Guardian*. He wrote also, amongst others, "The Christ of the Gospels." Congregationalists, not in Preston only, but throughout the country, were astounded by Mr. Martyn's announcement from the pulpit, on the last Sunday in March, 1879, that he had ceased to be a Congregational minister, and would henceforth pursue his labours in the Established Church. He has now a living at Wealdstones, Harrow, near London. The Rev. Samuel Robert Antliff comes next. He was trained at Lancashire College, and took as his first charge the Oak Street Congregational Church, Accrington. He began work at Preston on the first Sunday of the year 1880. He was publicly recognised on the 1st of March, 1880, and amongst others present was the new minister's father, the Rev. Dr. Antliff, principal of the Sunderland Primitive Methodist College. In October of the same year the church celebrated the centenary of its existence by a series of special services and meetings, and amongst those who took part were the Revs. J. C. Harrison, of London; Enoch Mellor, M.A., D.D., of Halifax; John Kennedy, M.A., D.D.; and J. G. McMinnies, Esq., M.P. In connection with these centenary celebrations Mr. Antliff was requested by the church to prepare the little book already referred to on Independency in Preston. He terminated his ministry at Cannon Street with the end of March, 1885, having accepted an invitation to the Ramsden Street Congregational Church, Huddersfield, where he now labours. The vacant pastorate of Cannon Street was filled up in October, 1885, by the Rev. Samuel Owen. He was trained at Brecon, and had previously laboured at Blaenavon, Swansea, and Stroud, whence he came to Preston. For many years it had been considered desirable that important alterations in the Cannon Street Chapel should be made, and during Mr. Owen's ministry this work was accomplished. The following description of these alterations is from the *Preston Guardian* of November 12th, 1887:—

"A very handsome and commanding stone front has been erected in Guildhall Street. Four massive pillars, with richly-carved

capitals, support a large pediment. The remaining ground has been enclosed with stone walls, surmounted with wrought iron railings, and above the gate pillars are ornamental lamps. A capacious vestibule has been formed, and a beautifully-designed screen of lead lights, of Cathedral tints, has been provided. The entrance doors at this end are in three pairs, and these afford ample accommodation for ingress and egress. New staircases have been formed on the right and left hand sides. On entering the building, it is found that the order of things is reversed; the pulpit, organ, and vestries have been removed from the west to the east end. The pews have been remodelled, and made more in harmony with modern requirements, the provision of ease and comfort having been studied in their construction. The old windows have been taken out and replaced with new ones glazed with tinted muffled glass, with coloured border. The ceilings under the galleries have been removed, and raised some four feet at the end nearest the wall, whereby the air space has been greatly increased, and the appearance much improved. The walls have been beautifully coloured in greenish tints, relieved with a neat border. The decoration of the sacred edifice throughout has been nicely finished. The alterations have cost about £2,000, and the work has been executed by the following firms:—Joinery, Mr. Hill; masonry, Mr. Harrison; painting and decorating, Mr. Croasdale.”

The reopening services were held on November 13th, 1887, when the Rev. J. Ogmores Davies, of Blackburn, was the preacher, his text being Ps. li., 12, 13. The collections for the day amounted to £53 3s. 10d. The old entrance in Cannon Street remains, over which is a tablet, with the following inscription:—

INDEPENDENT CHAPEL

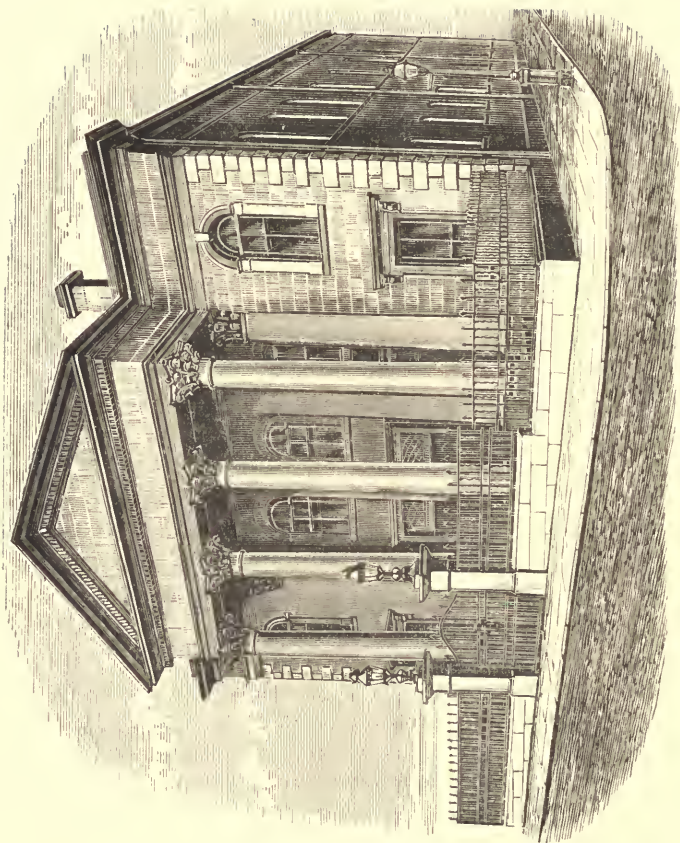
CANNON STREET, 1825.

ENLARGED 1852.

But the principal entrance is now in Guildhall Street. Previous to these reopening services a grand bazaar was held in the New Public Hall, from October 5th to October 8th, 1887, by which the sum of over £2,000 was raised. This more than met all the expenses attending the alterations.

Mr. Owen left Preston at the end of March, 1888, for Waver-

tree, near Liverpool, where he still labours. The present minister, Rev. B. Nightingale, the author of this work, educated at Nottingham and Lancashire, and who had previously laboured at Oldham and Farnworth, entered upon the pastorate of Cannon Street on Sunday, August 26th, 1883. In the early part of 1889, to complete the alterations referred to, a handsome screen, with illuminated Scripture texts, was erected immediately behind the pulpit, and lead lights were placed in the minister and deacons' vestries, to correspond with those at the front entrance. The chapel is now a substantial as well as handsome structure, and may run on a few decades again without any important alterations. It will accommodate some eleven or twelve hundred people, and so ranks amongst the largest chapels of the county. Connected with it are two Sunday schools, about each of which a brief note is necessary. A Sunday school was first commenced on March 16th, 1812, in connection with the chapel of Fishergate. Better accommodation was provided on the removal to Cannon Street—the school being under the chapel. The present handsome building in Bairstow Street superseded the Cannon Street school in 1862. The foundation stone was laid in August, 1861, by Mr. Councillor Teale, and the building was opened on Good Friday, April 18th, 1862, when the Rev. Dr. Raffles preached in the morning, from Psalm xc., 16, 17. A public dinner was held in the afternoon, the following amongst others being present:—The Mayor of Halifax, John Crossley, Esq., Rev. R. Slate, Dr. Spence, Rev. R. Dawson, returned missionary from China. In the evening there was a public tea meeting, when, it is said, 900 partook of tea, the Mayor of Halifax presiding at the meeting afterwards. During the day also a bazaar was held. The style of architecture is modern Doric, and the building is of brick, patent brick front, with Longridge stone dressings. It measures about 87 feet by 44 feet, and cost about £2,400. The late Mrs. Halliday, member of Cannon Street Church, was one of the prime movers in the undertaking. It will accommodate some 550 scholars. Respecting the Walker Street School the following is from Mr. Antliff's little book:—"The Walker Street School was opened in Mr. Carnson's ministry, about the year 1845, and seems to have superseded a room in the neighbourhood of Snow Hill, which had been used for some time as a



CANNON STREET CHAPEL,

branch school.”¹ At times it has been used as a day school, and also as a kind of mission room. There is provision for about 350 scholars. The following is a copy of the certificate which permitted the school to be used for religious purposes in 1850:—

Lancashire to Wit.

These are to certify that at the General Quarter Sessions of the Peace, held by adjournment at Preston, in and for the said county, the 10th day of April, in the 13th year of Queen Victoria's reign, a certain building occupied as a day and Sunday school in Upper Walker Street, in Preston, in the said county, was duly registered as a place of religious worship for Protestant Dissenters.—E. GORST, Deputy Clerk of the Peace for Lancashire.

The church has sent forth from itself more than one who has done good service in the Christian ministry. The Rev. John Rawlinson, who recently resigned his charge at Knot Mill, Manchester, was “commended” by the church “to Blackburn Academy, June 17th, 1841.” The Rev. Joseph Bliss “went to an academy in Pickering, Yorkshire, to study for a home missionary, August, 1841. On October 1st, 1846, he was transferred by dismission to the church at Leyland,” where he laboured for several years. James Crompton is also named as a student in Blackburn Academy in 1837. His name, however, does not appear in the list of Lancashire students. Giles Hoyle received his dismission from the Cannon Street Church to the church at Milnthorpe, Westmorland, of which he had become pastor on November 3rd, 1826. After labouring here five years he removed to Stalybridge, then to Ancoats, Manchester, thence to Northowram, where he died October 27th, 1861, aged sixty-eight years. The Rev. E. S. Forster, also now at East Hartlepool, was formerly a deacon of the church. In the two schools are about 700 scholars, and the church membership numbers about 310. Preston has not taken kindly to Dissent, at least in its Congregational form. There has been little in the way of church extension. It must be confessed also, that the history of Nonconformity in the town contains some painful episodes which are amongst “the things which are behind” that are best forgotten. It is therefore to be hoped that in the second century of its existence this church will put on its “beautiful garments,” and so prove itself to be a worthy part of the denomination to which it belongs.

¹ “Independency in Preston,” p. 54.

IV.—GRIMSHAW STREET CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

THE origin of the Grimshaw Street Congregational Church was noted in the account of the Unitarian Chapel in this town. Of that chapel the Rev. William Manning Walker was minister from 1802 to 1807, when his retirement was brought about through his altered views on the doctrine of the Trinity. Prefixed to the Grimshaw Street Church Book is an interesting account of the circumstances which led to his secession and the formation of this second Congregational Church in the town. It has evidently been written by Mr. Walker himself, and is worth printing in full. It proceeds thus:—

In the month of June, anno domini 1802, a young man of the name of Walker, little more than 18 years of age, originally a native of Yarmouth, in Norfolk, but who had been about three years a student at the Academy in Manchester belonging to the Arian and Socinian Dissenters, came over as a Supply to preach for one Sabbath at a small chapel situated in Church Street, Preston, then occupied by a congregation of persons of the above-mentioned denominations, by whom he was invited to continue to supply there once a fortnight, till he should have completed his course of study at Manchester, with a view to his being at that period fixed amongst them as their minister. He complied with their request, and in July, 1803, came to reside at Preston, and undertook the discharge of the pastoral office amongst them. At the time of his first visiting Preston, though zealous, he was ignorant of the Gospel, coinciding very nearly in sentiment with those who are called High Arians. His mind, however, was even then on the inquiry, and during the time that intervened between his first visit and his settling at Preston he was led into a further acquaintance with divine truth, principally through attending on the ministry of the Rev. Samuel Bradley, at the Independent Chapel, in Mosley Street, Manchester. When fixed at Preston, though but a babe, and very unskilful in the word of righteousness, he began to declare to the people as God gave him utterance what he had learned of the truths of the Gospel. And ere long the effects were seen in an increase of the congregation, and the awakening of one or two to a serious concern for the salvation of their souls. In this chapel he continued to preach till July, 1807, during which period God was pleased to enlarge his views of divine Truth, and to enable him to open his mouth, boldly to speak the mystery of the Gospel. In the meantime his acquaintance with Evangelical ministers was enlarging, and the congregation gradually increasing. A few professors in the town and neighbourhood, who were warm friends to the cause of Christ, attached themselves to his ministry, and

others appeared to be called out of darkness into light. Some of the original congregation, however, who were decided Arians and Socinians, had long marked this progressive alteration with considerable discontent, and at length determined to demand of Mr. Walker his resignation of the pulpit, on the ground that it was originally designed for the use of the Arians and Socinians only. After some time spent in seriously considering the subject, and consulting with neighbouring ministers and friends, it was judged expedient to comply with their demand; and the 12th of July, 1807, being fixed as the time for his relinquishing the place, in the afternoon of that day he preached a farewell sermon from Acts xx., 26, 27. Those who loved the Gospel, however, and a great majority of the congregation desirous still to retain him as their minister, proposed to erect another chapel, in which they might assemble for worship; and being encouraged in their design by neighbouring ministers and friends, they determined to attempt the work. God put it into the hearts of the people to contribute liberally, and being very kindly assisted by other friends, they proceeded to erect the present edifice in Grimshaw Street, which was opened for public worship on Tuesday, April the 12th, 1808; Mr. Charrier, of Lancaster, preached in the morning, from Phil. i., 12; Mr. Bowden, of Darwen, in the afternoon, from Isaiah xi., 3-5; and Mr. Fletcher, of Blackburn, in the evening, from Luke viii., 18. During the interval between their leaving the chapel in Church Street and the opening of the new chapel in Grimshaw Street, Mr. Walker and his friends were accommodated with the use of a vacant chapel belonging to the Anti-Pædo Baptists, where they assembled without interruption at the stated seasons for worship, and had the happiness to see the work of God advancing, and the number of attendants increasing. On Sunday, June the 12th, 1808, every obstacle being by the merciful providence of God happily removed, Mr. Walker and a few of the serious friends united together to form themselves into a regular Independent Church; of which transaction some further account is given in the following pages of this book. May the Lord maintain the faithful preaching of His gospel in this place, and establish His Church here for the glory of His great name. Amen.

This "further account" from the Church Book I here append, together with the "covenant" into which the members of the newly-formed church entered.

MEMORANDUM.—That on the 12th of June, 1808, being Lord's Day, a discourse having previously been delivered on the Nature, Discipline, and Authority of a Church of Christ, the following persons, associated for the purpose of Christian fellowship, viz., William Manning Walker, Richard Hamer, Thos. Ferguson, John Burnet, James Brierley, Thomas Paterson, John Stuart, Henry Tongue, Joseph Gerrard, James Burns, and John Dewhurst—and publicly in the presence of the congregation there assembled

in Grimshaw-street Chapel, gave themselves up to the Lord, and to one another, to walk together in Church fellowship agreeably to the tenor of the following covenant, which was then read, and to which they signified their assent by joining hands.

THE CHURCH COVENANT.—We, a company of poor sinners, called by rich grace to know and believe in the name of the Almighty Saviour, do hereby covenant and agree to give ourselves unto the Lord, and to one another, to walk together in Church fellowship according to the laws, statutes, and ordinances of His house, desiring herein to aim at the glory of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and at our own spiritual edification and comfort.

After the church had been duly formed the same day Mr. Walker was formally invited to the pastorate, and on the 28th of the same month he was ordained. From the Church Book again I copy an account of this service, which will be read with interest :—

June 28th, 1808.—The church being assembled this day, together with some of the pastors of neighbouring churches, who were invited to assist on the occasion, a discourse was delivered by Mr. Miller, of Chorley, on the Nature of an Independent Church, after which William Manning Walker gave an account of his conversion and made a confession of his faith, and was then set apart to the office of pastor by prayer and imposition of hands; after which Mr. Roby, of Manchester, gave him a charge from 2 Cor. iv., 5, and Mr. Grimshaw, of Forton, addressed the people from 1 Samuel xii., 24.

In the evening the Rev. Joseph Fletcher, of Blackburn, preached from Matt. xvi., 18. The success of Mr. Walker's ministry soon began to show itself in the need for increased accommodation. The chapel when erected contained no gallery, but in 1810 one was put into the front. In 1817 another enlargement took place, and the chapel was reopened on the 23rd of November in that year, three sermons being preached by the Rev. J. Fletcher, of Blackburn. Failing health led to his resignation of the pastorate in 1821. He had not been able for some time to follow the duties of his office, and it had come to his ears that on that account some of the people thought a change desirable. His letter, read at the church meeting held October 19th, 1821, is worth insertion on many accounts, and is as follows :—

To the Church of Christ assembling at Grimshaw Street, Preston.

Brethren,—It was not you but the Providence of God which brought me to Preston, through a door of His own opening, more than 19 years ago.

Having himself taught me to preach the Gospel, for I had no human instructor, He made that Gospel effective to the conversion of souls, and a little company of those who loved to hear of Jesus was soon gathered around me. I was never a stranger to trials since I came to reside in this town, for during the first four years I ministered the gospel in the midst of those who were enemies to the truth, and scoffers at the zeal with which I preached Christ crucified. These men the Lord suffered at length to thrust me out. But he made the wrath of man to praise him, and opened before me a wider and an effectual door, by means of the building of this chapel in which we now assemble. Here I have ministered amidst much weakness and many trials, even to this day. But I desire to record the loving kindness of the Lord, who hath dealt bountifully with me. This place had at first no gallery; but within two years after it was opened a gallery was erected. About seven years ago the ground-rent was reduced, and about four years ago the chapel was enlarged and made what it is at present. During all this time it has pleased God to bear testimony to the word of His grace; and one and another has been born here. Some of these have died in the faith; some have removed to other places; and some remain unto this day. Other individuals likewise, who were converted elsewhere, attracted by the light which this Church has held forth by its Profession of the Truth, its Walking in the Ordinances of the Gospel, and its Maintaining of Godly Discipline, have come and joined themselves unto us, so that from fourteen, the number of members is increased to seventy. These things being so, it may appear strange to some that I should think of making an offer to the Church of resigning my office as their pastor, and I certainly owe it both to myself and you to assign some reason for doing so. I have no wish to have my mouth shut, and to cease to preach the Gospel; there is no work in which I so much delight. Nor do I wish to leave my present station for any other. I never was disposed to change, and it was in my heart to live and die with you. If, therefore, it had been your desire that I should continue to do what my strength allows, aided by such help as I might have procured from time to time, I should still have endeavoured to serve you to the best of my ability. But as there are some leading members of this Church who have for a long time desired to have another minister, and as it appears to me that many, if not the majority, are of the same sentiments, it seems to me a call of Providence to tender my resignation. I leave it, therefore, to the Church to consider of the matter, and to return such an answer to this letter as they may think proper. If on the whole they think it best to have another pastor, I shall give up my charge at the end of the year, and cast myself on the Providence of God. May God be merciful to you, brethren, and to your unworthy pastor.

W. M. WALKER.

The matter ended somewhat unhappily, and Mr. Walker eventually went to Manchester. For additional information respecting him,

the reader is referred to the previous article on the Preston Unitarian Chapel. A MS. sermon by Mr. Walker on the text—"The world by wisdom knew not God" (Cor. i., 21), is in my possession. It was written November 2nd, 1802, and preached at "Preston, November 7th, 1802," and was accordingly one of his earliest productions. It is a specimen of beautiful caligraphy, while the subject matter does credit to its cultured author; and much of the sermonic literature of to-day would be none the worse if it more largely possessed the reverent spirit which runs through the production of this youthful preacher. In the early part of 1823 the Rev. Thomas Macconnell began his duties as minister in succession to Mr. Walker. The following is an account of his ordination:—

"On Tuesday, March 16 [1824], the Rev. Thomas Macconnell, from Hoxton Academy, was ordained over the church and congregation assembling in Grimshaw Street Chapel, Preston, Lancashire. The Rev. S. Bell, of Lancaster, introduced the service; Rev. George Payne, M.A., of Blackburn, offered up the ordination prayer; Dr. Raffles delivered the introductory discourse, and asked the questions; the Rev. Jas. Gawthorne, M.A., of Derby, (Mr. M.'s pastor), gave the charge; and the Rev. Wm. Roby preached to the people. The Rev. S. Bell preached in the evening."¹

In the autumn of 1825 he resigned. "Atticus," in *Our Churches and Chapels*, says:—

"The Rev. Thomas Mc.Connell, a gentleman with a smart polemical tongue, drew large congregations, and for a time was a burning and a shining light; but in 1825 he withdrew, became an infidel or something of the sort, and subsequently gave lectures on theological subjects, much to the regret of his friends and the horror of the orthodox."²

In May of that year Mr. Macconnell was one of the preachers at the old Independent Chapel, Tockholes, in connection with the Whit-Tuesday lectures, as the following extract shows:—

¹ "Congregational Magazine" for 1824, p. 503.

² P. 164.

“On Tuesday last, the annual Whit-Tuesday lecture was preached at the Independent Chapel, Tockholes, near Blackburn, by the Rev. J. Brown, of the Scotch Secession Church, and the Rev. Thomas Mc.Connell, of Preston. This lecture has been established upwards of a century.”¹

The statement of “Atticus” that Mr. Macconnell, on his retirement from Grimshaw Street, became an infidel lecturer may be doubted. I fancy he is the same person whom we meet with afterwards as a Presbyterian minister at Gosport. From the “Evangelical Magazine” for 1841 I copy the following :—

CONGREGATIONAL CHAPEL, HIGH STREET, GOSPORT.—After the decease of the late Dr. Bogue, a part of the church and congregation under his care formed themselves into a church of Presbyterian order, and fitted up a neat chapel to worship in, at a cost of about £2,000, choosing for their minister the Rev. Thomas Macconnell.²

I imagine this was the Grimshaw Street minister, and though I am unable to give the date of his settlement at Gosport, it was after his retirement from Preston.³ His vagaries, therefore, to which “Atticus” refers, did not, it would seem, lead him as far as infidelity, but they did lead him to the desertion of Independency.

The Rev. Richard Slate succeeded Mr. Macconnell at Grimshaw Street in July, 1826. He was born in London, July, 10th, 1787, trained at Hoxton Academy, and settled at Stand, near Manchester, where he was ordained on the 19th of April, 1810. After a ministry there of nearly seventeen years, he removed to Preston. A full account of his recognition service as pastor at Grimshaw Street is contained in the Church Book ; and as this was a much more formidable thing sixty years ago than it is to-day, it will not be without interest for the reader. It is as follows :—

“On Thursday, October 19th, 1826, the church and congregation assembled with the pastors and members of sister churches to unite in the public designation of the Rev. Richard Slate to the pastoral office over this church and congregation. The morning

¹ *Preston Chronicle*, May 28, 1825.

² P. 613.

³ Dr. Bogue died October 25, 1825.

service commenced at 11 o'clock. The Rev. Henry Holmes (Baptist minister in this town) gave out the hymns. The Rev. D. T. Carson (pastor of the church assembling in Cannon Street Chapel) read suitable portions of Scripture, and engaged in prayer. The Rev. John Ely, of Rochdale, delivered the introductory discourse, on the nature of a Christian church. The Rev. George Payne, Theological Tutor of Blackburn Academy, requested one of the brethren to give an account of the circumstances which led to the invitation of R. Slate to become their pastor. This request was complied with by Mr. John Hamer, on behalf of the church, after which the brethren publicly recognised their call by lifting up the right hand. Mr. Payne then requested R. Slate to state his reasons for accepting the invitation. This he did; and publicly recognised the acceptance of the call by lifting up his right hand. Mr. Payne, in a very appropriate prayer, implored the Divine blessing on the union thus publicly recognised between the pastor and people. The Rev. W. Roby, of Manchester, gave some excellent advice to the pastor from 1 Tim., iv., 13, 'Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.' The Rev. Wm. Hodgson (minister of Lady Huntingdon's Chapel in this town) concluded the morning service with prayer. In the evening, at seven o'clock, the service was begun by the Rev. J. Speakman, of Tockholes, giving out the hymn. The Rev. D. Edwards, of Elswick, read the Scriptures and prayed. The Rev. Dr. Raffles, of Liverpool, addressed the church and congregation from 1 Cor., iv., 1, 'Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and the stewards of the mysteries of God.' The Rev. J. Deakin, of Chorley, concluded with prayer. The services were very interesting."

Mr. Slate continued to labour here until 1861, when after a pastorate of considerably over fifty years, nearly thirty-five of which had been spent in Preston, he resigned on the 7th of April in that year. On his retirement, at a meeting over which his friend George Hadfield, Esq., M.P., presided, he was presented with a beautifully illuminated address and a purse containing 400 sovereigns. He continued until his death to reside in the town and to be a member of the church of which he had so long been pastor. His intimate friend was the Rev. Joseph Dyson, of Farnworth, at whose ordina-

tion he had assisted. Between the two there was an understanding that when one died the survivor should conduct the funeral service. Mr. Dyson was interred on Thursday, December 5th, 1867, and according to promise Mr. Slate, though very weak, was present and took part in the service. The journey cost him his life, for having caught cold at the funeral he himself died on the following Tuesday, December 10th, at the ripe age of eighty years. His funeral took place on the following Monday, when his remains were taken to Stand. Friends met at his residence in Chaddock Street in the morning, where the Rev. Joshua Armitage, of Elswick, offered prayer; after which they marched in procession to Grimshaw Street Chapel, where the Rev. Evan Lewis delivered an address. On the following Sunday, also to a crowded congregation, he preached an appropriate sermon from 1 Corinthians, xv., 55-57. It is said that "such was the general esteem in which he was held at Preston that during his last illness public prayer was offered for him in one of the Roman Catholic chapels, at the instance of some good Romanist, who paid the necessary fees for such a service."¹ His biographer thus writes of him:—

"Although he was a decided and unflinching Nonconformist, yet he loved all who loved his Master and Lord, and was ready to co-operate with all for the promotion of the Redeemer's kingdom or the social and moral elevation of his fellow men. For many years he was secretary of the local auxiliary to the Religious Tract Society. He was a most amiable, loving, and kindly man, and speedily gained a place not only in the respect but the affection of all who were brought much into contact with him. In all movements for the public good carried on in the town he was ever ready to afford his active aid. Mr. Slate was a faithful, intelligent, and useful preacher of the Gospel."²

The following also from the pen of "Atticus" is worth insertion :

"Mr. Slate was a tiny, careful, smoothly-earnest man, consistent and faithful as a minister, made more for quiet sincere work than

¹ "Congregational Year Book," 1869, p. 281.

² Ibid.

dashing labour or dazzling performance; fond of the Puritan divines, a believer in old manuscripts, disposed to tell his audience every time he got upon a platform how long he had been in the ministry, but in the aggregate well and deservedly respected. No clergyman in Preston has ever stayed so long at one place as Mr. Slate."¹

The last sentence is perfect truth. Mr. Slate occupies a unique position in the history of Preston Congregationalism. The Rev. D. T. Carson, minister at Cannon Street from 1820 to 1847, excepted, no minister has remained anything like the time in Preston that he did. In another respect he occupies a unique position in Lancashire Congregationalism. As "Atticus" says, he was a believer in old manuscripts, especially such as related to the denomination to which he belonged, and he collected a large and most valuable assortment of them. To him Dr. Halley was greatly indebted for information in writing his "*Lancashire Puritanism*," as was the late Mr. Dobson also in editing his diary of the Rev. Peter Walkden. He was the author of two or three works of a denominational and antiquarian character. From his "*History of the Lancashire Congregational Union*," published in 1840, the author of this work has often drawn; his "*Select Nonconformists' Remains*" contains sermons by Oliver Heywood, Thomas Jollie, Henry Newcome, and Henry Pendlebury, from manuscripts in his own possession; but his greatest work is the "*Life of Oliver Heywood*," published in 1827, and forming Volume I. of "*The Whole Works of the Rev. Oliver Heywood, B.A.*," by the Rev. William Vint, of Idle, near Bradford. Most useful, too, has the writer found his notes on the Rev. R. Frankland's students in vol. iv. of Heywood's Diaries, recently issued by Mr. Horsfall Turner, of Idle. There are few men indeed unto whom antiquarians generally and Congregationalists in particular are more indebted than to the Rev. Richard Slate. It was during his ministry that the present imposing edifice in Grimshaw Street superseded the chapel of eighty years ago. At a public meeting held on December 5th, 1856, a committee was appointed for "the erection of a new and enlarged place of worship in Grimshaw Street, Preston." At this meeting it

¹ "Our Churches and Chapels," p. 164.

was resolved that "the intended new chapel should be able to accommodate about 900 persons." On the 28th of April, 1858, and three following days, a bazaar was held in the "Institution for the Diffusion of Knowledge," and after deducting all expenses, a sum considerably over £200 was realised. On the 1st of January, 1859, the taking down of the old chapel began, "the day on which the pastor 50 years before, preached his first sermon in Lancashire, as a supply at Stand Chapel." The corner stone of the new building was laid by Mr. Slate himself on Good Friday, April 22nd, of the same year. In the evening there was a public tea meeting, when Thomas Barnes, Esq., M.P., presided, and amongst others present was C. P. Grenfell, Esq., M.P., who gave a contribution of £20. The chapel was ready for worship by the end of the year, the opening services being on December 8th, 11th, and 12th. The preachers were the Revs. Dr. Raffles, Dr. Parker, Dr. Spence, R. Slate, and Geo. Scott (Wesleyan). These services brought in upwards of £200 towards the new chapel fund. Ten years after their appointment the committee drew up and circulated a report which says that "the amount of contributions they have received from all sources from the commencement to the present time is £3,490 6s. 11d." The expenditure during that period was £3,458 15s. 11d. It is interesting to note that the sum of £1,283 1s. was collected and paid to the treasurer by Mr. Slate himself. On the 11th of January, 1862, the Rev. John Briggs, from Airedale College, succeeded Mr. Slate at Grimshaw Street. In October, 1866, he resigned and went over to the Established Church. In the following month the Rev. Evan Lewis, B.A., F.R.G.S., accepted an invitation, and began his ministry at Grimshaw Street on Sunday, January 20, 1867. He also was an Airedale student. His first settlement was Barton-on-Humber, where he was ordained in 1853; thence he removed to Rothwell, Northamptonshire; in 1863 settled at Accrington, whence he came to Preston. Failing health obliged him to seek a warmer climate, and in October, 1868, he removed to Offord Road, London. He died on the 19th of February, 1869, and was interred in the Abney Park Cemetery. He was the author of several works, among which may be named:—"Independency: a deduction from the laws of the Universe;" and "The Grimshaw Street

Chapel Pulpit.”¹ An important change took place during the ministry of Mr. Lewis, at Grimshaw Street, which should not be left unnoticed. At a church meeting held on the 29th of May, 1867, he delivered an address on “Sacramental Wine,” in which he urged the use of the unfermented juice of the grape at the Lord’s Table. It was resolved that the discussion of the question should be postponed until next church meeting, July 3rd, 1867, when it was unanimously agreed that the wine should be “changed according to the suggestion of the chairman.” With many churches this used to be an exceedingly delicate question. Some have all but made shipwreck upon it, and that the change was so peacefully made at Grimshaw Street more than twenty years ago witnesses to the happy relations which existed between minister and people. Mr. Lewis’s successor at Grimshaw Street was the Rev. G. F. Newman, who began duty as such in August, 1869. He was trained at Western College, Plymouth, leaving in 1860, but, says “Atticus,” “during the past seven or eight years, through delicate health, he has spent much of his time in France.”² He retained his charge only until March 30th, 1870, when he resigned and withdrew from the ministry. His successor was the Rev. James Clough. He was educated at the Baptist College, Rawdon, and began ministerial work at Grimshaw Street in the autumn of 1870. In May, 1877, an organ was purchased from Messrs. Grindrod and Co., Rochdale, at a cost of £350 together with the old organ. About this time many of the better families connected with the church began to leave the town, and from this cause it has suffered seriously ever since. Mr. Clough removed to Greenheys, Manchester, in September, 1880, where he still labours. The Rev. Wm. Lewis, from Spring Hill College, followed in 1881, and resigned towards the close of 1883, for Portsea. He is now labouring at St. Mary Cray. His wife is the daughter of James Tullis, Esq., of Preston. The present handsome new school adjoining the old one is a memorial of Mr. Lewis’s labours. The Rev. John Todd Ferrier, trained at Nottingham Institute, whose first settlement was Wigton, in Cumberland, began his ministry here on May 4th, 1884, and terminated it with the end of June in this year. A debt of £1,000

¹ “Congregational Year Book” for 1870, p. 303.

² “Our Churches and Chapels,” p. 168.

during his ministry has been considerably reduced. He is the author of "Sacrifice a Necessity." The church is at present vacant. It is necessary to give a little information about the Grimshaw Street Sunday School, and this will be best done by quoting from a speech by the Rev. R. Slate. It was delivered at the welcome tea meeting for the Rev. E. Lewis on January 21st, 1867. Mr. Slate said :—

"It gives me great pleasure also to state that almost as soon as the old chapel was built one of the first Sunday schools in Preston was formed by the earliest members of this Church, and which has been continued to the present time. For many years the scholars were taught in the vestry and in various pews in the chapel. This was very inconvenient, and was injurious both to the school and the congregation. At the close of 1835, an opportunity presented itself of some land on the south side of the old chapel being obtained for the enlargement of the burial ground and the erection of a school-room. The undertaking was commenced, and conducted with such zeal, liberality, and unanimity, that the minister of the place had the happiness of delivering an address on the 2nd of October, 1836, in a room capable of containing upwards of three hundred scholars. In 1845 the building was raised a second storey, and was so altered as to be capable of accommodating between five and six hundred children and teachers. Such was the zeal and liberality of the people that within ten months from the commencement of the work the schools were completed. All honour to the memories of a few pious individuals who took an active part in these labours of love to their dying day. So that at a public meeting held February 21st, 1850, it was announced that a slip of land on the north side of the chapel had been purchased, the schoolrooms were entirely free from debt, that there was no ground rent or interest to pay, and that all the premises had been put into trust for the purposes for which they had been erected."

As previously stated, during the ministry of the Rev. W. Lewis the new school buildings were erected in 1881. They were opened in the autumn of that year. At the same time the old upper school-room was made into class-rooms, and the graveyard levelled, flagged, and made into a playground. The cost of the whole under-

taking was £1,699 5s. 11d., towards which a sale of work realised over £386. There are now about 260 scholars belonging to the school. A sentence or two must also be devoted to the day school. This was commenced January 6th, 1868, and largely through the exertions of Mr. William Bruckshaw, now of Bolton, formerly of Preston. The present head master, Mr. Greenhalgh, is the first and only one who has occupied that position. The school has had a most honourable career, has done and is doing good service to the cause of education. There are at present over 500 children taught there, and an enlargement has recently been made to meet their ever-growing requirements.

V.—LANCASTER ROAD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

THE third Congregational Church in Preston, situate in Lancaster Road, originated in a secession from Cannon Street, during the ministry of the Rev. Thomas Davies, in 1860. Why the secession is not clear, beyond the fact that some differences between the pastor and certain of the people led to his resignation. He presided at a meeting of the Cannon Street Church for the last time on February 2nd, 1860, and concluded his ministry at the end of March. The resignation of the pastor led to a meeting in Cannon Street Chapel on Wednesday evening, March 7th, 1860, of a considerable number of church members, who "unanimously resolved to unite together as a company of true believers in Jesus Christ, to observe religious ordinances, and to promote their mutual edification and holiness, and also as a means of extending the Saviour's Kingdom." It was therefore agreed that a "third and distinct church should be formed as soon as convenient." A document, a copy of which is here given, was then agreed to by the meeting:—

To the Church of Christ assembling in Cannon Street Chapel, Preston.

DEAR BRETHREN,—We, the undersigned, being members of the Church of Christ assembling in Cannon Street Chapel, Preston, acting under a solemn conviction that it will be most conducive to our spiritual welfare,

¹ Lancaster Road Church Book.

and also for the honour of our Lord and Saviour and increase of His Kingdom, do hereby withdraw ourselves from your fellowship, and request that our names be taken off your Church Book. It will be our fervent prayer that the Great Head of the Church will bless you with an increase of His Spirit, and send you prosperity.—We remain, with Christian regards,

[Here follow the signatures of 107 members.]

March 7th, 1860.¹

This document was accompanied by a letter from the committee appointed for the time being, requesting from the Cannon Street Church an official communication to the effect that the persons named in the document were members of that church up to the present time. These two documents were presented to the Cannon Street Church at its meeting March 29th, and called forth the following reply :—

Cannon Street School, March 29th, 1860.

At a church meeting held this evening, it was resolved : Inasmuch as the following persons have stated their intention of withdrawing from our Communion, for the purpose of instituting religious worship and instruction in a part of the town where their labours are much needed, and as they have requested from us an official communication testifying that they have been members with us up to this date, and now withdraw for the purpose above specified, we hereby grant their request, and authorise the chairman to forward to them a copy of the resolution, as furnishing the testimonial which they desire.—Signed on behalf of the church,

JOHN HAMER, Chairman.²

The new church was formally constituted on the following evening, Friday, in the Avenham Institute. The Rev. William Roaf, of Wigan, conducted the devotional services, and delivered an address “bearing upon the circumstances under which those present had met to form a new church.” The members present “joined hands as a token of union and affection for each other as members of the same body;” and to the “infant church” an “appropriate and affectionate address” was delivered by the Rev. John Sugden, B.A., of Lancaster. Three important items of business were transacted by the church at this its first meeting. First, four deacons were elected, the names being John Crook, John Greenall, Richard Parkinson, and Frederic Thorp. Then the Rev. William Roaf was

¹ Lancaster Road Church Book.

² Ibid.

requested to propose the church for admission to the County Union at its next meeting. Further, it was resolved that the Rev. Thomas Davies, late minister of Cannon Street, be invited to become pastor. Mr. Davies's reply, read at the close of the Sunday evening service, April 15th, stated that he had accepted "an urgent and perfectly unanimous invitation" to the Duckworth Street Congregational Church, Darwen. Mr. Davies's career subsequently is given in the history of Cannon Street, and so need not be repeated here. Steps were at once taken for the erection of suitable premises for worship. A tea meeting was held on the 14th of June, 1860, in the schoolroom belonging to Grimshaw Street Chapel, at which it was stated that a plot of land in the Orchard, belonging to Mr. Ward, of Liverpool, had been fixed upon, the cost being about £1,100. Upon this site a school and minister's vestry were erected in 1861, the schoolroom being opened for worship on June 30th of that year. The Rev. W. C. Stallybrass was the morning preacher, and the Rev. A. Reed, B.A., of Cannon Street, was the evening preacher. On the following evening a social tea meeting was held, under the presidency of Thomas Simpson, Esq., when addresses were given by the Revs. G. W. Clapham, C. Garrett, C. Williams, R. Slate, W. Roaf, A. Reed, W. C. Stallybrass, W. Hodges, S. S. Barton, Wm. Knox, and other friends. The cost of the whole undertaking was about £1,400. Previous to this the church had secured a pastor in the gentleman whose name stands first in the list just given—the Rev. G. W. Clapham. He was trained at Lancashire College, entered the ministry in 1849, and settled first at Nailsworth, in Gloucestershire. He was minister at Haslingden from 1853 to 1861, in which year he removed to Preston. His letter of acceptance is dated December 1st, 1860, and his ministry began early in the New Year. The year 1862 being the bi-centenary of the ejection of the 2,000 Nonconformist ministers, the Congregational body resolved to celebrate the event by the erection of a number of chapels. The Lancashire Committee of the Bi-centenary Fund having intimated their willingness to devote £1,000 (including £300 specially appropriated) for a chapel at Lancaster Road, a meeting of the church and congregation was held, at which another £1,000 was raised. Steps were accordingly taken 'at once towards the erection of this building. The corner stone

was laid on Monday, August 25th, 1862, by John Hamer, Esq., of Preston, in place of James Pilkington, Esq., M.P., of Blackburn, who was prevented from fulfilling a promise to do this through serious indisposition. An address was delivered on the occasion by the Rev. J. G. Rogers, B.A., of Ashton-under-Lyne, now of London; and the Revs. G. W. Clapham, A. Reed, R. Slate, J. A. Macfadyen, M.A., and others took part in the service. The chapel was completed and opened in August, 1863. Mr. Clapham continued to labour at Lancaster Road until the beginning of 1868, when he resigned, and, after a short time, made his way into the Church of England. His successor was the Rev. Edwin Bolton, who began his Preston ministry in March, 1869. He was educated at Hackney, entered the ministry in 1859, and previous to his settlement at Preston laboured at Bromley, in Kent, and Brixton. At the end of February, 1874, Mr. Bolton resigned, and went to Weymouth, in Dorsetshire, where he remained till 1881, when he removed to Gravesend. In 1887 he resigned his pastorate at this place, and is now minister at Northfleet, in Kent. Mr. Bolton was succeeded at Preston, in March, 1874, by the Rev. Alexander Legge. He received his training for the ministry at the Edinburgh Theological Hall, and had as his first charge the Congregational Church at Peterhead, where he began to labour in 1868. From this place he came to Preston, as intimated above, in 1874. In February, 1878, to the great regret of his congregation, he resigned his charge, having decided to enter the Established Church of Scotland, in whose communion he is still labouring. His present living is at Kilconquahar. No successor was appointed until June, 1879, when the Rev. J. Lambert entered upon duty here. He was trained at Weston-super-Mare, entered the ministry in 1860, and held pastorates successively at Glastonbury, Kingswood, and Swindon, coming from the latter place to Preston. In 1883 Mr. Lambert removed to Bristol, where he is now resident without charge. The Rev. Thomas Evans succeeded him in 1884, and left for Victoria Park, London, in 1886. It will interest some readers to know that Mr. Tillet, who figured so largely in the recent dockers' strike, is a member of Mr. Evans's church. The present pastor (Rev. A. T. Hogg), a student of Lancashire College, entered upon his ministry here on July 1st, 1888. He was ordained on Wednesday

evening, October 17th, of the same year, when the Rev. J. E. Moore, of Chinley (Mr. Hogg's former pastor), offered the ordination prayer, the Rev. Professor Scott, LL.B., of Lancashire College, gave the charge to the minister, and the Rev. J. McDougall expounded Congregational principles. Other ministers assisting in the service were the Revs. T. H. Wright, of Lytham, and E. W. Place, B.A., of The Quinta, Salop.

The membership of the Church stands at 173, and in the Sunday school are some 350 scholars. All the institutions, of which there are several, are in vigorous working order. An important organisation, or rather collection of organisations, is the Congregational Guild, instituted a short time ago. There are associated with it five bands, viz., Band of Hope, Choral Band, Provident Band, Pastors' Co-operative Band, and Recreative Band. There is a Council of fifty elected from the different bands, and the membership of the Guild is 150. The Band of Hope, which is affiliated with the Guild, has about 300 members.

It only remains to add a few sentences descriptive of the block of buildings owned by the Lancaster Road Church. This will be best done by the following extract, which, though written nearly thirty years ago, is substantially true of the present buildings:—

“At a period when Gothic is the style almost universally adopted for ecclesiastical buildings of every description, to find a design such as is that for this building (prepared by Messrs. Poulton and Woodman, of Reading) in the pure Italian style, is a fact worthy of record. The design, which comprises chapel and schools, is striking for its grand simplicity of composition. A very handsome and well-proportioned portico to front the Lancaster Road, is designed to give entrance through two vestibules. The chapel is spacious and lofty, the width in the choir is 58 feet, and the extreme internal length 74 feet. At the end opposite the entrance is a semi-circular recess of sufficient size to contain an organ, the platform for the accommodation of singers, and the rostrum; the doorways leading to the vestries and school buildings are in the wide played reveals of an arch, separating this recess from the main building; this arch, with an illuminated text round the upper part, will, it is believed, when executed, be both novel and pleasing in

appearance. The object for locating the preacher and choir in the position mentioned is, as may be supposed, for the sake of producing a satisfactory acoustic effect. This important point, often so much neglected in buildings intended for public worship, has in this design received particular attention. In addition to the features already mentioned, the interior corners of the building are to be constructed of a circular form, and the ceiling, flattened in the centre and coved at the sides, is designed also with especial reference to this desirable end, but presenting at the same time a most agreeable appearance. The ceiling just mentioned is to be coffered, but not very deeply, and the moulding in the panels will be tinted. The four of these panels round the centre of the ceiling will be filled with obscured glass, so as to admit a softened but sufficient light to the centre of the chapel. The effect of this will, it is thought, be highly satisfactory in execution. Light is also to be admitted at the sides and front through semi-circular headed windows. The lighting at night is to be accomplished by means of the description of gasaliers termed 'star lights,' of which a number is to be suspended from the intersection of the ceiling beams. The accommodation is for about 1,100 persons. The schools are entered from Vicarage Street, and are designed in harmony with the chapel. There are two large rooms, one over the other, each 51 feet by 34 feet, and there are also to be four class-rooms contiguous to these rooms. The total cost, exclusive of land, is estimated at £3,500."¹

The last sentence but one does not quite accurately describe the schools as they at present stand. The room (the lecture-room) on the ground floor measures about 33ft. by 16ft., and contiguous to it are eight classrooms. On the upper or second floor is the large schoolroom, 66ft. by 33ft, together with a classroom which opens out into the chapel.

As already stated, the chapel is a memorial of the 2,000 ejected ministers of 1662, and it is worthy of note that it stands on or near the site once occupied by the old vicarage, where formerly resided that celebrated Nonconforming Vicar of Preston, the Rev. Isaac Ambrose. "They purchased," says Atticus, "a site on the higher

¹ "Congregational Year Book" for 1861.

side of the Orchard, contiguous to the old vicarage—a rare piece of antique, rubbishy ruin in these days—and very near, if not actually upon, ground which once formed the garden of the famous Isaac Ambrose, who was Vicar of Preston in 1650, and afterwards ejected [whilst at Garstang], with many more in the land, on account of his religious opinions.”¹ There is need that Preston Nonconformity should be of a robust and manly type, and worshipping beneath the very shade of this staunch old Nonconformist, the Lancaster Road Congregational Church, least of all, is not likely to be faithless to its principles.

VI.—THE NONCONFORMIST MEETING AT HOGHTON TOWER.

MUCH has been written at different times about this fine old mansion, which has figured so prominently in our county history. It stands upon a bold eminence, is about “an equal distance of five miles between Chorley and Blackburn,” and about six miles south-east of Preston. It was erected in 1565 by Thomas Hoghton, whose initials, together with the date, are still to be seen (though very faint) above the gateway on the inner wall of the courtyard. An interesting description of the Tower as it appeared in the days of Charles I. is given by the antiquarian, Dr. Kuerden. “This tower,” says he,¹ “was build in Queen Eliz. raigne by one Tho. Houghton, who translated this manor-house formerly placed below the hill, nere unto the waterside. Betwixt the inward square court and the 2d, was a very tall, strong Tower or gate-house, which, in the late and unhappy Civil Wars, was accidentally blown up with powder, with some adjacent buildings, after the surrender thereof, and one Captain Starkey and 200 were killed in that blast most wofully. The outward is defended with two lesser bastions upon the south-west and north-west corners, besides another placed in the midst betwixt them now serving for an outward gate house. This stately fabrick is invironed with a most spacious park, which in former time was so full of tymber that a man passing through it could scarce have seen the sun shine at middle of day; but of

¹ “Our Churches and Chapels,” p. 66.



Bick & Co. London W. 2. 40

later days most of it has been destroyed. It was much replenished with wild beasts, as with boars and bulls of a white and spangled colour, and red deer in great plenty the last as yet preserved for game by the Lords thereof." From the days of Kuerden to these, the Tower, its antiquity, historic associations, and picturesque surroundings have been favourite themes for antiquarians and historians; but, with one exception, no writer has given any account of the Nonconformist meetings which used to be held there. The exception referred to is Mr. W. A. Abram, who, in his "Independency in Blackburn," tells briefly the story of Nonconformity as it is associated with the Tower. The Houghton family, owners and occupants of the Tower, were for generations of the Catholic persuasion. Sir Richard, who entertained King James in so sumptuous a manner in the year 1617, Dr. Halley says, was the first of the family who avowed himself a Protestant. On the outbreak of the Civil War, in 1642, the owner of the Tower was Sir Gilbert Houghton, who is described as "the brilliant courtier of James the First's reign." Dr. Halley says that he "was a fierce and determined Royalist, and his tower was probably the strongest and most defensive house in the county in the possession of the king's forces."¹ To give the story of his life would be to give the history of the first five years of that great conflict which had consequences at once disastrous and glorious. From his stronghold upon the hill, he made repeated raids upon the Puritan districts round about. Next to Lord Strange, he was the most ardent Royalist in the country. A quaint writer, describing the events of 1642, says: "For the last weeke Sir Gilbert Houghton set his Beacon on fire, which stood upon the top of Houghton Tower, and was the signall to the Countrey for the Papists and Malignants to arise in the Field [Fylde], and in Lealand Hundred; wherupon great multitudes accordingly resorted to him to Preston in Andernesse, and ran to Blackburne, and so through the Countrey, disarming all and pillaging some."² How it came to be I do not know, but it is a fact, that whilst Sir Gilbert was thus vigorously helping the Royalists, his eldest son Richard went to the opposite side, and, "even before the death of his father, became an active member of the Parlia

¹ "Lancashire Puritanism and Nonconformity." Vol. i., p. 281.

² "Civil War Tracts" (Chetham Society, Vol ii.), p. 65.

mentary Committee" Possibly Sir Richard inherited his Puritan tendencies from his mother, Lady Margaret Hoghton, who died in 1657. A high character is given to her in the funeral sermon preached by the Rev. Isaac Ambrose, the Nonconformist vicar of Preston. The sermon, which was preached on January 4th of that year, was afterwards published under the title of "Redeeming the Time." On succeeding to his father's title and estates in 1647, Sir Richard transferred the Hoghton interest to the side of Puritanism or Nonconformity. His wife, Lady Sarah Hoghton, was a daughter of the first Earl of Chesterfield, and is said to have been "very eminent for religion." Tong, the biographer of Matthew Henry, further says that she was "a great patroness of religion and Nonconformity."¹ During the years that persecution fell heavily upon Nonconformists her house was for them an asylum. Hunter, in his "Life of Oliver Heywood," says: "After the Act of Uniformity this [the Hoghton] family had service conducted by Nonconforming ministers. There was a regular Nonconforming congregation formed under her patronage and that of her son, Sir Charles."² Whether any records of these meetings were kept or not, I do not know; none have been preserved. Our information, collected from diaries and various historic works, will, therefore, be very imperfect. Adam Martindale, a celebrated Nonconformist minister, ejected from Rostherne, in Cheshire, has an interesting passage in his autobiography which shows that he was more or less resident at the Tower during 1664. "Afterwards I was wished," says he, "to come to Preston in Ammoundernes, at the breaking up of the schoole for Christmasse, where, besides four shopkeepers that were my scholars, I had a set of brave lads that were not onely content, but accounted themselves happie, to make up of that time (that others plaid away) for their improvement. In this place they vied with Warrington for liberality, and in both places I had the happinesse of spirituall libertie and employment among the Christians of most eminencie. After Christmasse, 1664, I was entertained at Hoghton Tower to instruct the wise and virtuous Mr. Charles (now Sir Charles) Hoghton, his brother Mr. Benjamin, and some others, where Sir Richard, my ladie, and indeed all the family,

¹ P 197.

² P 106 (note).

showed me great respect ; and for libertie to preach there was more than I desired, for they had an able and godly chaplaine of their owne, that I delighted to heare, besides many eminent men that came occasionally, of which the most are now dead [written about 1685]. Now because this was like to be a long businesse of a yeare's continuance or more, I would not be tied to constant attendance, but still taught one weeke and went home the other to bestow my paines among mine old people, though this was to my worldly losse ; for my pay and other priviledges at Hoghton were worth about 20s. a weeke, whereas what I got among my people was not neare halfe so much ; but that I stood not upon, having this way more opportunitie to doe good, and maintenance sufficient."¹ It is evident from this passage that Martindale must be reckoned among the occasional Nonconformist preachers at the Tower. The name of the "able and godly chaplaine" to whom he refers has not been preserved. Possibly it may have been the Rev. Josiah Holdsworth, who, we know, was chaplain about this time. He was the son of the Rev. Josiah Holdsworth, ejected from Poppleton, in Yorkshire, and who died at Wakefield, October 18th, 1677, at the age of seventy-five years. Josiah Holdsworth, junior, was educated at Cambridge, and ejected from Sutton, in Yorkshire, probably at the time of the Restoration in 1660. Shortly after this he became Sir Richard Hoghton's chaplain, remaining until the Declaration of Indulgence in 1672, when he removed to Heckmondwike, in Yorkshire. At this place he laboured until 1685, when he died at the age of forty-six.² Calamy says of him : "A man of great piety, sincerity, strictness, and industry for the good of souls ; and blessed with abundance of success."³ Besides this "able and godly chaplaine of their own," Martindale mentions "many eminent men that came occasionally." Some of these may be identified. The Rev. Thomas Jollie, ejected from Altham in 1662, and afterwards at Wymondhouses, at the foot of Pendle Hill, where he built a chapel, the ruins of which remained until a short time ago, thus writes in his Church Book under date 1665 : "Lady

¹ "Life of Adam Martindale" (Chetham Society, Vol. iv.), p. 177.

² "Congregationalism in Yorkshire" (Miall), p. 271. Hunter says that he was fifty when he died.

³ "Nonconformist's Memorial" (1802). Vol. iii., p. 471.

Hoghton kept two days of prayer every month for a long time, and Pastor was much there." In the same book, under date 1670, is another record, the meaning of which is not quite clear. Sir Richard Hoghton died in February, 1678, his funeral sermon being preached by Dr. Seth Bushell, Vicar of Preston. Hunter says that a "high character is given of him as a person of great worth and honour, and esteemed in the several relations of public and private life; but he is not celebrated for any peculiar strictness in his religious profession." Oliver Heywood also says that "he was a favourer of good things, though no great zealot." It has already been stated that Lady Hoghton was "a great patroness of religion and Nonconformity." Was it that Lady Hoghton was over zealous, and Sir Richard not zealous enough that some difference between them arose, which drew forth from Thomas Jollie a rebuke by which he lost her favour? I do not know, but in his Church Book, under date 1670, it is recorded: "For admonishing Lady Hoghton for leaving her husband, he lost a friend." That sentence at least shows how faithful these early Nonconformist ministers were to what they considered the call of duty. Isaac Ambrose, the Vicar of Preston, whose life has been previously sketched, would be another of these occasional preachers. So also was the Rev. Henry Newcome, M.A., of Manchester. His diaries and autobiography show that he was on most intimate terms with the family. A few extracts will be acceptable to the reader:—

[1676] March 11th (Saturday). I was now at Walton (at Sir Richard Houghton's) with my wife. I am kept in awe by my suspense about new from home.²

[1678] Wednesday, February 6th. Heard this day of the death of Sir Richard Hoghton: buried at Preston, February 14th. I was at his funeral.³

[1679] July 9th (Wednesday). Dr. Banne unexpectedly came in, and it was on account of his being at Huntingdon upon the occasion of my Lady Hoghton's being sick of the smallpox, which we were much troubled at, apprehending her danger, because of her years. I prayed to God for her and the Lord did bring her through in some time.⁴

¹ "Life of Heywood," p. 106 (note).

² "Newcome's Autobiography" (Chetham Society, Vol. xxvii.), p. 218.

³ Ibid. p. 304.

⁴ Ibid. p. 229.

[1680] June 3rd (Thursday). My Lady Hoghton had been a night or two with us about a month since or more, but now unexpectedly came to us. Her dissatisfaction and trouble I desire to be affected with, and do hope the Lord will overrule this whole affair for good unto us all.¹

[1682] August 4th (Friday). I went to give a visit to Sir Ch. Hoghton and his lady, having not seen him before since his coming to the tower.²

[1690] October 20th. From Bolton lecture I went to Blackburn. Strangers, and in the night. The way perilous ; but the Lord brought us in safety. Mr. Greene came to me late at night. In the intermin I had the company of my old hearty friend, Mr. Sagar. The next day we went to Ribchester, where we visited and endeavoured to order the charity school there ; and despatched, so as I came to Hoghton Tower in good time. Mr. Sagar came to me ; and then I stayed the next day in much content and freedom and hearty welcome with our old friend, Sir Charles Hoghton. The next day I stayed at Preston for Mr. Greene (but had company of friends glad to see me, as Mr. Birch, Mr. Par, &c.).³

Oliver Heywood also was a visitor at the Tower. Hunter says that he was invited to become minister at Preston probably at the suggestion of Lady Sarah Hoghton. "His call to Preston," he says, "was clear and complete, for he had the nomination of Sir Richard Hoghton, the patron of the living, and the unanimous concurrence of the people."⁴ This call, however, he did not accept, being influenced, no doubt, by the advice of his father-in-law, Mr. Angier, who said : "It is ill transplanting a tree that thrives well in the soil." Another of these eminent preachers at the Tower occasionally was the Rev. John Howe, M.A. He is described as a familiar friend of Sir Charles Hoghton and his wife, Lady Mary Hoghton. He preached the funeral sermon for Sir Charles's eldest son, John Hoghton, who died at the age of twenty-one years, in 1699. At Tockholes, some ten or eleven miles to the south east of Hoghton—about which more presently—a tradition yet lingers that this celebrated Nonconformist frequently preached to the people there during his visits to the Tower. There were others, but their names have not been preserved. Martindale, in the extract above given, says that most of the eminent men to whom he refers at the time of writing (about 1685) were dead. All the

¹ "Newcome's Autobiography" (Chetham Society, Vol. xxvii.), p. 233.

² *Ibid.* p. 242.

³ *Ibid.* p. 272.

⁴ "Life of Heywood," p. 106.

ministers above named—Isaac Ambrose excepted—lived after that date, and so the reference could not be exclusively to them. It is thus interesting to think that the Tower has been honoured not only by the presence of kings and nobles, but by the most notable Nonconformists of history, who were drawn thither by the prospect of shelter from fierce storms of persecution, and by the high religious character of the members of the Hoghton family. At this point, though we are anticipating somewhat, it will be proper to add to this list of preachers at Hoghton Tower, Matthew Henry, the great commentator. From his *Memoirs*, by J. B. Williams, F.S.A., the following passage is extracted: “He [Matthew Henry] was on terms of intimacy, likewise, with Sir Charles Hoghton, Baronet; and, after preaching at Chowbent, often visited Hoghton Tower, as well as Shaw Place [near Rivington]; sometimes both. This was the case May 26th, 1708, under that date he writes:—‘I had much edifying conversation with Sir Charles Hoghton, only he expressed too great an esteem for my poor performances. I came back to my Lord Willoughby’s.’ Sir Henry Hoghton’s name must not be omitted [from the list of Matthew Henry’s friends]; nor that of his sister, Madam Mary Hoghton, who, being taken suddenly ‘very ill at chapel’ in Chester, Sept. 17th, 1710, died two days afterwards at Mr. Henry’s house.”¹

We must now go back a little. Adam Martindale tells about his cousin, Timothy Hill, being chaplain to Sir Richard Hoghton in 1674. The passage reads thus: “I tooke him [Martindale’s son] up to London, together with his cousin, Timothy Hill, that had for some yeares been his bed-fellow and forme-fellow, admitted with him at Cambridge, instructed by the same minister in Cheshire, and laureated the same day with him at Glasgow. But from that time to this I am now speaking of, their studies as well as their geniuses differed much; my cousin giving himselfe to plaine country preaching, being Sir Richard Hoghton’s chaplaine, and my sonne to metaphysicks and schoole divinity. These two were invited and designed to goe together to the Indies as chaplaines to Captaine Johnson and Captaine Bendall, both of Wapping; but making triall of their gifts at Mr. Rither’s meeting-place of Wapping, my sonne’s preaching was thought to be too high for the seamen—even the captaines

¹ P. 172.

themselves—and his parts much fitter for London, where I left him with Mr. Baxter, his cousin going with Captaine Bendall. This was in October, 1675.”¹ There may be appropriately appended to this another extract from Martindale’s life, which records the death of Timothy Hill. Says he: “There was another thing worth the noting; my sonne’s *fidus Achates* (my cousin Timothy Hill) who had beene his companion so much in studies, travells, and conversation, died just a month after him to an houre, viz., upon the 29th of August, 1680, at two of the clocke, God taking them both (I hope) into heaven at the same time of day whereon they used to goe to his church on earth to doe him service. He died in Chester at my brother Nathan Jollie’s house, being minister at Stoke, and in a way of marriage.”² Hunter, in his life of Oliver Heywood, gives the names of Ainsworth, Sagar, and Kaye as ministers who conducted services at Hoghton Tower. Probably the first was Ralph Ainsworth, for many years an eminent Nonconformist minister in Cheshire, who settled at Rivington, about 1704, remaining there until his death in May, 1716. Charles Sagar was a native of Burnley, for sometime master of the Blackburn Grammar School, and afterwards minister of Lower Chapel, Darwen, and Walmsley, near Bolton. Mr. Kaye was probably the Rev. Thomas Key, a member of Mr. Jollie’s church, ordained in 1671, and minister at Walmsley about that time. The Rev. John Benson is named as a chaplain of the Hoghtons, and preacher at the Tower. Thomas Jollie, in his “Church Book,” notes the baptism of John Benson, in 1691, and speaks of him as “a hopeful scholar.” If the same—and it is exceedingly probable—then he was trained at Mr. Frankland’s Academy, Rathmell, and minister for some time at Bridlington, in Yorkshire, where he was buried May 2nd, 1720.”³

In Dr. Latham’s funeral sermon for the Rev. David Maddock, of Uttoxeter, who died May 26th, 1745, is a list of students educated by the Rev. Richard Frankland, of Kendal, Rathmell, &c. In that list appears the name of John Towers, who is said to have been “chaplain at Hoghton Tower.” He entered Mr. Frankland’s Academy July 25th, 1698, and if chaplain at the Tower at

¹ “Life of Adam Martindale” (Chetham Society, Vol. iv.), p. 210.

² *Ibid.* p. 223.

³ “Northowram Register” (J. H. Turner), p. 280.

all it would be immediately after completing his ministerial education. He was at Pateley Bridge, Yorkshire, previous to 1733, removing in that year to Hopton, in the same county. He died there June 3rd, 1745, and was interred within the chapel. The Hoghton family were closely associated with the old Nonconformist interests at Walton-le-Dale and Preston, which have already been described. The first ministers here were the Rev. John Parr, who died about 1714; Rev. John Turner, from 1714 to 1716; and Rev. John Pilkington, from 1716 to 1760. How far these served the Tower as chaplains in addition to their two charges at Walton and Preston we do not know. Mr. Abram says: "Mr. Parr may be mentioned as another frequent conductor of worship at Hoghton Tower . . . and the Rev. John Pilkington was for many years chaplain to the Hoghton family."¹ I am not able to question that statement, but it is certain that during the years covered by those two ministers the Tower had at least one chaplain of its own. This was the Rev. Thomas Benson; whether related to John Benson, one of his predecessors here, is not known. At the ordination of the Rev. Robert Moss at Elswick on the 10th of July, 1717, Mr. Benson was the preacher. He was at the Tower about 1717, and is mentioned in Peter Walkden's Diary as signing, along with others, the ordination certificate of the Rev. Robert Hesketh, on October 27th, 1725. He removed about 1728 to Tunley, near Wigan, where he remained until his death. In the graveyard of the chapel there is his tombstone, upon which is the following inscription:—

Here lie the Remains of
the Rev. Thos. Benson,
minister, first at Hoghton
Tower, afterwards at this
place; a Person of Sound
Learning, Piety, and Probity,
kind to the Poor of all
Persuasions, and ready to do
Good. He died Dec. 14th,
1757, aged 74.

In the diary just named are two or three references to a Mr. Helm, "schoolmaster, near Hoghton Tower, examined of late, at

¹ "Independency in Blackburn." p. 14.

Preston, and approved, and licensed as a candidate to the ministry." I do not know that he was ever connected with the Tower, and concerning him I have no information. There was a Rev. John Helme, of Penruddock, in Cumberland, afterwards at Walmsley, near Bolton, from 1750 to 1760; but whether the same as Mr. Helm, of Hoghton, or whether related to him, has not been ascertained.

The last Nonconformist minister at the Tower of whom I have information, probably the last resident there, is the Rev. John Rawlins. He was born in 1726, entered the Presbyterian Widows' Fund in the year 1766, being then forty years old, paid sixteen subscriptions at £2 2s. per annum, and died April 4th, 1782. His widow received an annuity of £8 for six and a half years, and died in 1789. Mr. Rawlins himself received from the same fund £31 11s. in benefactions. His first was in 1781, and was £16 11s.; second in 1782, and was £10; third in 1783, and was £5. The Rev. Franklin Baker, M.A., of Bolton, from whom these particulars were obtained, says that, inasmuch as it was unusual to give benefactions, the fact that Mr. Rawlins himself was a recipient, suggests that some misfortune or poverty had befallen him. Mr. Rawlins's son, Thomas, was a Dissenting minister for several years at Rivington and Wharton, dying at the latter place January 15th, 1787, in the 31st year of his age. A relation of this family has lent me an old Bible, formerly the property of the Rev. John Rawlins, afterwards of the Rev. Thomas Rawlins, which bears date 1698. From it I copy the following particulars respecting the Rawlins family:—

"Jno. [the Rev. John] and Sarah Rawlins, married April 30, at Cathidrial, Manchester, 1747.

"Mary, their daughter, born May 3rd, 1752.

"Hanah, the daughter of Jno. and Sarah Rawlins. Born April y^e 22, 1754, at 8 of the clock in the morning being monday.

"Thomas [afterwards minister], the son of Jno. and Sarah Rawlins, born Saturday, between 5 and 6 of the clock in the afternoon, August 20, 1756.

"Martha, son of Jno. and Sarah Rawlins, born November the 3rd, 1758, died on the 4th.

"John, the son of Jno. and Sarah Rawlins, born January 25th, 1761, being Monday, died Jan. 29, 1764."

The Brindle Parish Registers show that several of Mr. Rawlins's children were buried there. The precise date when Nonconformist worship ceased at the Tower I do not know. Probably, as already stated, Mr. Rawlins was the last minister there. The owner and occupant of the Tower at this time was Sir Henry Hoghton, Bart., who, says Mr. Abram, in his "*History of Blackburn*," "was returned in the Whig interest as M.P. for Preston in 1768, and afterwards represented that borough in five successive Parliaments, until his death. He died, aged sixty-seven, March 9th, 1795. Sir Henry Hoghton was the acknowledged Parliamentary leader of the Nonconformist party, for whose relief he introduced and carried some important measures."¹ The rise of Nonconformity in the neighbouring town of Blackburn, by the foundation of the Chapel Street Congregational Church in 1777, drew away from the Tower the Sefton, Whitaker, Ainsworth, Hargreaves, and other families who had been accustomed to worship there. Thus weakened by the withdrawal of these families, and at no great distance from Preston and Walton, it is easy to see how this Nonconformist meeting at the Tower would die for want of support. Mr. Abram, however, says that tradition has it "a Nonconformists' service was maintained on the Sunday until the death of Sir Henry Hoghton, Bart., M.P., a Parliamentary leader of the Dissenters in 1795."² Dr. Evans, in his list of Presbyterian Chapels, drawn up between the years 1717 and 1729, gives Hoghton Tower with a congregation of 180. "The place of worship," says Mr. Abram, "at the Tower was the large apartment in the north-west wing, which had formerly been the dining-hall; and an ancient bell with a Latin inscription upon it, fixed in the roof of the chapel, was rung to call the Nonconformist farmers and peasantry of the neighbourhood to Sabbath worship."³ Besides having Nonconformist worship in the Tower itself, and lending material support to the Nonconformist interests of Walton and Preston, the Hoghton family were long most intimately connected with the Independent Meeting House at Tockholes. From the "*History of Independency in Tockholes*" the following passage bearing upon this matter is extracted: "The

¹ P. 721.

² "*Independency in Blackburn*," p. 15.

³ *Ibid*, p. 15.



Woodcut, 1870

Harpington Hall, Harpington, W. Lonsdale

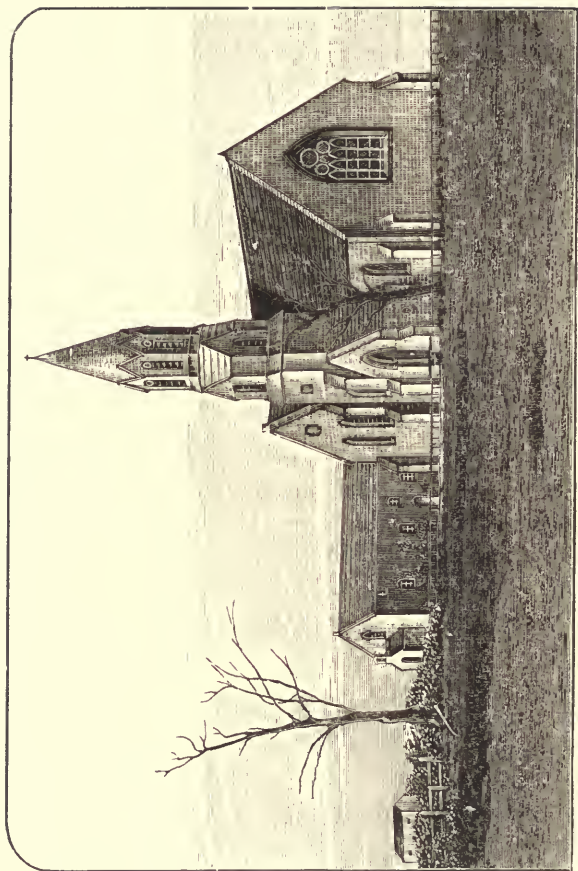
Hoghton family have already been named as patrons of Nonconformity in Tockholes. Two large square pews in the centre of the chapel were owned by them, to the door panels of which were affixed the shield and monogram of Lady Mary Hoghton, widow of Sir Charles Hoghton, who died in 1710. The pew doors bore this date. In the seat rent-book the Hoghtons of the Tower first appear as contributors in 1716, and their contribution was as follows:—

1st [Pew] of the Honourable Lady Hoghton	7s. od.
2nd ditto.....	7s. 6d.

The year after, Lady Hoghton's pews were respectively 8s. and 12s. 6d."¹ The last of the Hoghton baronets who attended the meeting-house at Tockholes, says Dr. Halley, was Sir Henry, probably the uncle to Sir Henry Hoghton already named as Parliamentary leader of the Nonconformist party. Dr. Raffles tells how he was accustomed to say to his favourite minister, the Rev. Thomas Waldegrave, of Tockholes, and also to the praying members of the congregation, "Pray for me; for there are very few in my situation that go to Heaven."² It only remains to be stated that any future history of the Tower will not be complete which ignores its Nonconformity—which flourished there for considerably over a century.

¹ P. 42.

² "Lancashire Puritanism and Nonconformity," by Dr. Halley. Vol. ii. p. 429 (note).



ELSWICK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE RIBBLE TO THE WYRE.

I.—ELSWICK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

IN the heart of the Fylde district lies the quaint little village of Elswick, where, for at least two centuries and a half, Congregationalism has made a gallant fight for existence, and not in vain. The village itself can lay claim to some antiquity, for its name is found in some of the earliest documents relating to the county. In the Domesday Book it appears as Edelswic, and in some documents of a little later date as Ethelswyck and Etheliswyck, the villa, retreat, or residence of an Anglo-Saxon proprietor named Ethel. The great Cistercian monasteries of Sawley and Whalley, which had their origin in the Abbey of Stanlaw, appear at one time to have been immensely rich in landed possessions. Nearly the whole of Blackburn hundred passed into their hands, and in the 13th and 14th centuries, in the Hundred of Amounderness, Elswick, Preston, and other places were owned by them. Besides its antiquity, the village can boast of historical associations of considerable interest. In the great Civil War which resulted in the dethronement of Charles Stuart and the establishment of the Commonwealth with Cromwell as Protector, our noble county played a not insignificant part, and in the Fylde country the din of battle was often heard. So also during the rebellions of 1715 and 1745, when descendants of the unfortunate Charles made vain attempts to win back the throne. Cannon balls and earthworks thrown up by troops are said to have been found in the neighbourhood of Elswick, all of which show that sanguinary conflicts have at one time and another taken place here. But it is the battle for religious freedom which this little Congregational Church has so long and faithfully fought which

invests the village with special interest, at least for Nonconformists. In no part of Lancashire has Roman Catholicism exercised a more powerful influence than in this. From Preston—the town of priests—to Lancaster, the great ruling families are mainly Catholic, and for generations have been; and under their patronage that church has been able to keep this part of the county largely to itself. Physically considered, this part of Lancashire is so well watered and richly-productive, especially of grain, as to be called the cornfield of Amounderness; but it has long been regarded as, spiritually, most barren and destitute. At a ministerial gathering held at Preston, in April, 1700, a letter was drawn up memorialising the London brethren, who had charge of some charitable funds, for help for “y^e northern parts of Lancashire, where Popery and Prophanesse have obtained more than in other parts.”¹ Yet, as already stated, in the very centre of this district this Congregational Church has existed for over two centuries, and it may be called the mother of Congregationalism in the Fylde.

In the Congregational Year Book the date of the origin of the church is put down at 1672. This is manifestly wrong, for more than twenty years before this time there was a chapel in existence. In 1650 the Parliamentary Commissioners reported as follows:—

“The Inhabitants of Elswick, being five myles from their parish Church, have lately, with the voluntary and free assistance of some neighbouring townes, erected a Chappell in Elswick aforesaid, fiftie pounds p. ann., by order from the Comittee of plundred Ministers beinge allowed to such Minister as the said Comittee shall approue of, none as yet being allowed; the townp consistinge of fiftie families, they humbly desire it may be made a parish, and that competent maintenance may bee allowed to the Minister there.”²

The Vicar of St. Michael's, writing in 1722, says that the chapel was “Certif[ied] An[no], 1722, y^t nothing belongs to it. This chap[el] was built about An[no] [no date given], by [the] contrib[utions] of [the] Inhab[itants] and neighbours. It stands upon a Common called the Wastes or Leys, uninclosed. Divine service was performed in this chap[el] in y^e memory of severall now living;

¹ “History of Tockholes Chapel,” p. 82.

² “Commonwealth Survey” (Record Society, Vol. i.), p. 148.

but for many years together [it] was used as a school, till King Jam's [should be Charles's] Toleration, wⁿ the Presbyterians seized it, and have used it for a Meeting ever since."¹

In an account of Copp Chapel also, erected in 1723, it is described as "near Elswick, w^{ch} being never Consecrated and in the possession of Dissenters, it was thought more proper to build a new Chappel here yⁿ to seize upon that."² This seizure of Elswick Chapel by the Presbyterians was in 1672, when Charles II. granted indulgence to the persecuted Nonconformists, but the two first extracts show that it was built many years previous to that. In 1650 the chapel is said to have been lately erected. It does not appear in the list of Lancashire Classical Presbyteries, dated 1646. Consequently it is safe to infer that it came into existence between those years. There is a tradition in the Hodgkinson family, of Elswick, that Ann Smith, who was born about 1640, the great-great-grandmother of the late Mr. T. Hodgkinson, laid the foundation for it. It is quite possible, if we bring the date of its erection near to 1650. At that date also, we are told, that there was no minister at Elswick, and further, that though £60 per annum had been granted by the Committee of Plundered Ministers, none as yet had been paid, probably because no minister had been settled here.

Baines mentions a "Dr. Swarbrick, the Nonconformist minister of Elswick, whose library was destroyed by the earl of Derby's followers on their march against Lancaster."³ The latter part of that passage is based upon a statement in the *Discourse of the Warr in Lancashire* to the following effect:—"It was said the Earle himself [in 1643] stayed at Elswick, whilst his companie plundered Mr. William Swarbrecke's Books, a blemis and stain to his honour—if true."⁴ This William Swarbrick was made a captain in the Parliamentary Army, and appears to have been especially active and useful as such. He was the son of John Swarbrick, of Roseacre, and his sister, Ellen, married Cuthbert Harrison, of whom more presently. How Baines makes him out to be the Nonconformist

¹ "Notitia Cestriensis" (Chetham Society, Vol. xxii.), p. 452.

² Ibid, p 453.

³ "History of Lancashire" (Ed. 1870) Vol. ii., p. 495.

⁴ Chetham Society's publications, Vol. lxii. p. 28.

minister of Elswick is not clear, and from the foregoing it would appear that the chapel was not erected when his library suffered at the hands of the Earl of Derby's troops. It would be pleasant to associate thus early with Elswick Chapel one who was soldier, doctor, and preacher, but in the absence of evidence this may not be done. For fifteen or twenty years after 1650 we have no history of the chapel beyond the statement of the vicar of St. Michael's that "for many years together it was used for a school." It is hardly likely, however, that this would be its sole use, and the ease with which it was obtained by the Dissenters in 1672, and retained by them afterwards, suggests that they had some claim upon it previously. We arrive upon more certain ground when we come to the Rev. Cuthbert Harrison, the first known minister.

He was born about 1627, and was the youngest of five brothers, the sons of Richard Harrison, of Newton, near Kirkham. Having finished his studies at Cambridge, he was ordained in the Kirkham Parish Church according to the Presbyterian form. His certificate reads as follows :—

"Whereas Cuthbert Harrison, Bachelor of Arts, aged about 24, years, hath addressed himself unto us, authorised by ordinance of Parliament, of the 28th of August, 1646, for ordination of ministers, desiring to be ordained a Presbyter, being chosen by the inhabitants of Singleton, within the chapelry of Singleton, of the county of Lancaster, to officiate there, and having been examined by us, the ministers of the seventh classe, and found sufficiently qualified for the ministerial function, according to the rules prescribed in the said ordinance, and thereupon approved, we have this day proceeded solemnly to set him apart to the office of a Presbyter, and work of the ministry of the Gospel, by laying on of hands by us here present, with fasting and prayer. By virtue whereof we do declare him to be a lawful and sufficiently authorized Minister of Jesus Christ. In testimony whereof we have hereunto put our hands the 27th of November, 1651,

"RICHARD BRIGGS,

"JOHN LAPPYE,

"RICHARD READMAN."

From Singleton he removed to Shankell, in the county of Armagh, and according to a document dated at Dublin, July 14th, 1660, he was to be supplied with "what the profits of the said tithes [of Shankell] shall appear to fall short of his former salary of £100 per annum." From this place he was ejected in 1662, and "narrowly escaped with life in a ragged disguise for England," whilst his "beloved people there preserved his goods for him." In 1672 he obtained a license to preach at Elswick Chapel, of which the following is a copy:—

"Charles, by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c., to all mayors, bayliffs, constables, and other our officers and ministers, civil and military, whom it may concern, greeting—In pursuance of our declaration of the 15th of March, 167½, we have allowed and we hereby allow of the meeting-house in Elswick Lees, in the parish of St. Michael's, in our county of Lancaster, to be a place for the use of such as do not conform to the Church of England, who are of the persuasion commonly called Congregational, to meet and assemble in, in order to hear public worship and devotion; and all and singular our officers and ministers—ecclesiastical, civil, and military—whom it may concern, are to take due notice hereof; and they and every one of them are hereby strictly charged and required to hinder any tumults or disturbance and to protect them in their said meetings and assemblies.—Given at our Court at Whitehall, the 16th day of July, by his Majesty's command,

"CLIFFORD."

The term "Congregational" in the license is worth notice. The licenses of 1672 were after a few months declared illegal by Parliament, and Mr. Harrison, like others of that time, had to experience persecution again. It is said that he "preached in his own house at Bankfield, as he had formerly done, before that he had obtained the license, and also at several houses in and near Elswicke, very privately in the night, to such as would adventure to hear him. He often went into Ireland to visit his beloved people there. He practised physic with good success, whereby he supported his family and gained the favour of the neighbouring gentry." That

¹ From the "Christian Reformer" for 1843, p. 473.

passage is taken from a letter written by Cuthbert Harrison's son Richard to a younger brother Paul, who desired some information about his father. Most of what precedes, as also what follows, respecting Cuthbert Harrison is from the same source. Had he learned how to practise physic from his brother-in-law, Dr. Swarbrick? Richard Harrison, the writer of the letter, calls Dr. Swarbrick his uncle, and states that he was his authority for some of the information respecting his father contained in his letter. The Rev. Richard Clegg, vicar of Kirkham, was Mr. Cuthbert Harrison's greatest persecutor; and for preaching, baptising, and marrying he got him excommunicated.

On one occasion, being in the Parish Church when the vicar was preaching, he ordered the churchwardens to put him out. Mr. Harrison refused to go, and eventually Mr. Clegg himself came, and took him by the sleeve to the door. Mr. Harrison remarked as he went out, "It's time to go when the devil drives." Other stories of a like humorous character are circulated in the neighbourhood, all of which show that his strong personality made a deep impression upon the people. To the end of his days the storms of persecution raged around him, and he died under sentence of excommunication, in the month of October, 1681. "Great entreaty," says his son, "was made to Mr. Clegg to suffer his body to be buried in the church who was prevailed with, and he was interred a little within the great doors, which has since been the burying place of our family." This sketch of Mr. Harrison would be incomplete if the epitaph fixed upon his grave by Mr. Clegg were omitted. It reads thus:—

Here lies Cud,
Who never did good,
But always was in strife.
Oh! let the knave
Lie in his grave,
And ne'er return to life.

A Mr. Lowd, of Kirkham, almost immediately altered it to:—

Here lies Cud,
Who still did good,

And never was at strife
But with Dick Clegg,
Who furiously
Opposed his holy life.¹

As previously stated, Cuthbert Harrison married Ellen Swarbrick, by whom he had issue William, Richard, Paul, and a daughter, Claudia. Descendants of this staunch old Nonconformist minister have at different times risen to celebrity. The Rev. Ralph Harrison, of Manchester; the Rev. Dr. Harrison, of Chowbent; Dr. James Bower Harrison, an eminent surgeon in Manchester, all claimed Cuthbert Harrison as their great ancestor. Through many generations the family has had one or more of its members in the ministry.

There is no record of any minister at Elswick for many years after this time, nor is it difficult to account for this. From 1672 to the Revolution in 1688, with but little intermission, persecution prevailed. The Nonconformists everywhere were imprisoned and fined, and the outcast ministers met their flocks in secluded places where they hoped to elude the vigilance of the minions of the law. Some eight years after the death of Cuthbert Harrison the Rev. R. Waddington, afterwards minister at Tockholes, appears to have been stationed at Winmarleigh, only a little way from Elswick.² Mr. Waddington was a member of the Rev. Thomas Jollie's church at Wymondhouses at the time, and it is not improbable that he was itinerating in this district. He would, therefore, render the Elswick Congregationalists at least occasional service, even if he may not be regarded as one of their ministers. A call was given to the Rev. Jonathan Nightingale in 1703.³ Mr. Jollie records this in his church book, but whether because Mr. Nightingale was a member of his church, or because there was something singular about the call itself, does not appear. He entered Mr. Frankland's academy July 12th, 1697, and on its removal in part to Manchester, under the presidency of Mr. Chorlton, he went there on February 20th, 1699, to have his education completed. He died in 1705.

¹ Canon Raines and some others think the lines in question are the "harmless effusion of an obscure poet" of quite recent times; but they are distinctly stated by Richard Harrison to have been put upon his father's grave by Richard Clegg.

² "History of Tockholes Chapel," pp. 79-81.

³ Thomas Jollie's "Church Book."

The Rev. Robert Moss was the next known minister, and concerning him a few interesting items of information are offered by the old church book kept by him. It is in a very dilapidated condition, and much of it has disappeared. From it we gather that he was probably a native of Manchester. The following entries by himself are self explanatory, and worth copying in full :

"The copy of the Testimonial w^h I produced at my examination, compos'd [word illegible] by W^m. Rowlinson.

"Having been desir'd to give our testimonies to y^e reverend [?] ministers of y^e class, what we know and believe concerning the life and conversation of Rob^t. Moss, our neighbour, and residing in the same town with us ; we, as far as we know, do believe him to be a man of a very unblameable life [?] and Xⁿ conversation.

"Witness our hands, this 2^d day of Septemb^r 1713,

"WILLIAM ROWLINSON,

"NATH. BLINKHORN.

"I believe this testimony to be true,

"JOHN LOMAX DE WORSLEY.

"On Thursday, y^e 15 day of October, 1713, I went before the ministers at Mr. Aldred's (viz^t Mr. Aldred, moderator pro tempore, Mr. Dawson, Mr. Gellibrand, Mr. Heywood of Blackley, Mr. Green, Mr. Denton, and Mr. Reyner), and was examined in school-learning and Philosophy.

"1. Several introductory questions being asked me as to y^e effect : I. Whether I desir'd to be admitted as a candidate for y^e ministry, and if admitted whether I wou'd in due time devote myself to the ministry. II. I answered to y^e effect that it was my desire to be admitted if tho't fit after examination, and that thro' grace I design'd in due time to devote myself to y^e ministry by ordination. Help me, O Lord.

"2. Mr. Aldred presiding, said y^t y^e y^e cou'd but look on y^e outside, and cou'd not discover y^e frame of y^e Heart, &c., and therefore requir'd w^t testimonials I had of my behaviour, upon w^{ch} I produc'd the Testimonial. Give me grace, O God, to live according to thy word.

"3. The Question being put whether I had renew'd my covenant at y^e Lord's table, &c., I answer'd that to my grief as yet I had

not, but thro' y^e divine grace did design to do it, wⁿ I had opportunity. O, God, give me grace so to do, and qualify me for y^e worthy receiving of y^e Lord's Supper.

"I went in before y^e ministers betwixt 10 × 11 of y^e clock, and came from y^m a little past 12.

"On y^e 1st of Novemb^r 1713, I receiv'd Sacrament of the Lord's Supp^r at Manchester, and oh may I never forget to bless God for his ordinances, and live according to y^e vows of God w^{ch} are upon me.

"On y^e 19 of Novemb^r 1713, I was before y^e class at Mr. Reyners, and being examin'd in Divinity, after I had discours'd from Prov. iii., 8, was admitted (blessed be God) as a candidate for y^e ministry.

"Mr. Dawson, Moderator pro tempore, gave us his advice :

"1. To be humble ;

"2. To be much in prayer.

"Mr. Aldred advised us to study y^e true politicks, to study to approve ourselves true X^{ns}, and resolve thro' grace to be faithful ministers. Help, Lord.

"On the 27th June, 1714, I had a *call* or invitation to come to Elswick by y^e congregation.

"On July 10, 1717, I was ordained at Elswick. Mr. Benson preached, Mr. Coningham ask'd the questions, Mr. Jolly gave the charge, and Mr. Rothwell prayed over me. Lord, assist, bless, and comfort me in the course of my ministry."

There are some interesting references to Mr. Moss in the Rev. Peter Walkden's diary, but as they have already been given it is unnecessary to repeat them here.¹ During Mr. Moss's ministry the second chapel was erected in 1753. He survived this event six years, dying in 1759 after a period of forty-five years' service in the cause of Christ. His tombstone is in Elswick Chapel yard, and is thus inscribed :—

Here are interred the Remains of the
REVEREND ROBERT MOSS,

A worthy minister of Christ, a man generally esteemed and loved, who served his Lord in a useful and exemplary manner at Elswick 44 years, and died April 2nd, aged 71. A.D., 1759.

Go, Reader, and follow them who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises.

¹ See ante p. 14.

Mr. Moss tells us that his "dear honoured mother died" at the age of eighty years, on "September 16, 1745, about 3 o' th' clock in the morning;" and his "late dear honoured father" at the age of eighty-two, on "March 20, 1749-50," a "little after six o' th' clock in the afternoon."¹ The old chapel in which Cuthbert Harrison worshipped is put down in Dr. Evans's list as having a congregation of 290 persons, and in it were twenty-six county voters. The second chapel, the one built during Mr. Moss's ministry, is still standing, and is used for Sunday school purposes. In the graveyard around it repose the remains of many of the principal families who for generations have been staunch Nonconformists in the Fylde district.

From May to August, 1761, the registers are signed by J. Wilding. He was a native of Leyland, entered the Daventry Academy in 1754, and was afterwards transferred to Warrington. Elswick would be his first charge, and he appears to have remained only a short time. He was ordained May 18th, 1762, and was minister at Congleton for a short time.² In 1763 he was assistant to the Rev. Mr. White, of Derby. From this place he removed to Prescott, where he died. In the aisle of the chapel at Prescott is a tombstone to his memory, which states that he died February 12th, 1781. Nothing is known about Mr. Aspinall, the next minister,³ and nearly the same thing must be said about Mr. Tunstall, who succeeded. He signed the register for the first time on August 14, 1768, and was probably one of Mr. Scott's students of the Heckmondwike Academy, whose fellow students would be Thomas Waldegrave, of Tockholes, and Allatt, of Forton. Socinianism about this time was creeping into these old Dissenting churches, and the Elswick minister appears to have been somewhat under its influence; for on the celebrated Captain Scott

¹ Elswick Old Church Book.

² "Monthly Repository," 1822, p. 164.

³ Several writers give "Aspindel," but the registers show that the spelling in the text is correct. There was a Rev. John Aspinall about this time at Walmsley, who died at Risley. He was probably the same as the Elswick minister. The registers indicate that the chapel was supplied between the years 1764 to 1768 by several ministers, among whom were Andrews, Bent, of Chorley, Smalley, of Darwen, and Allatt, of Forton.

paying a visit to Elswick, and desiring to preach in the chapel, Mr. Tunstall refused him the keys. The trustees, however, forced open the doors, and Mr. Scott preached to a large and appreciative audience, with the result that some were converted from error. This would be about 1774, during which time Captain Scott visited these parts of Lancashire. Probably the feeling excited by these occurrences led to Mr. Tunstall's removal, for in 1776 the Rev. Thomas Phillips was minister at Elswick. Our information respecting Mr. Phillips is as meagre as that concerning his two predecessors. He assisted in the ordination of Captain Scott at Lancaster as a preacher at large on the 18th of September, 1776; and, together with the Rev. G. Burder, helped to originate Independency in Preston.

Mr. Phillips's last entry in the baptismal register is dated Nov. 12th, 1780. He was succeeded by the Rev R. Simpson some time during the year 1781. He also was one of Mr. Scott's students, and had previously laboured at Haslingden for about ten months. He stayed only twelve months at Elswick, much to the regret of the congregation. One of his hearers, a Mr. Greenall, who was greatly fascinated by Mr. Simpson, resolved to follow him to Bolton, where he next settled; and here he rose to a position of respectability and wealth. His only son Mr. Simpson afterwards trained for the ministry. This was the Rev. Thos. Greenall, for many years at Burnley. Mr. Simpson was ordained at Duke's Alley, Bolton, on October 2nd, 1782, the charge to the minister being given by the Rev. James McQuhae, of Blackburn. He left Bolton in 1791 to become Tutor of the Hoxton Academy, where he had conferred upon him by the University of Glasgow the degree of D.D. Increasing age and infirmity brought about his resignation in May, 1817, and on the 21st of December of that year he died, being buried on the 30th in the Bunhill Fields, London. The Rev. Timothy Senier followed Dr. Simpson at Elswick on the 12th of November, 1784. A life of this excellent man, largely written by himself, is still in existence, from which a few interesting particulars have been collected.¹ He was born at Cawthorne, near Pennistone, in the year 1763. He first formed the intention of going to sea, and journeyed as far as Mottram, in Cheshire, on his way to

¹ "Miscellanea Sacra" for 1797, pp. 1-38.

Liverpool for this purpose. After his conversion, he entered Mr. Scott's Academy at Heckmondwike, where he continued for three and a half years. His ordination at Elswick was on the 19th of October, 1785, concerning which he says: "When the solemnities of the day were concluded, before the assembly broke up, Mr. Richard Swindlehurst, one of the deacons, stood forth, and expressed his great satisfaction in seeing the accomplishment of what he had most earnestly desired; and two days after, viz., on the 21st of October, he died, leaving the church militant to join the church triumphant." His ministry, it is said, was "acceptable and successful," and his "ministerial gifts were superior to those of some others of the Lord's servants." He died on the 11th of February, 1796, in the thirty-fourth year of his age, leaving a "widow and four small children, all daughters, the youngest an infant at the breast." A little previous to his death he had separated himself from the Elswick Church, having changed his views on baptism, and with him originated the Baptist cause at Inskip. Some of Mr. Senier's descendants are still in the neighbourhood. The Rev. Abraham Hudswell was the next minister at Elswick. He was trained partly by Mr. Vint, at Idle, and partly at Rotherham, whither the old Heckmondwike Academy was removed in 1795. He settled at Elswick in 1797, remaining barely three years. He removed to Bingley, and afterwards to Morley, where he laboured for over twenty years. He is described as a "man of great zeal and piety." He died on February 27th, 1838. The Rev. David Edwards, trained under the Rev. Jenkyn Lewis, at Wrexham, settled at Elswick in 1800. His ordination took place on the 5th of August in the following year, when the Revs. T. Whiteley, of Tockholes; P. S. Charrier, of Lancaster; L. Redmayne, of Horwich; J. McQuhae, of Blackburn; J. Grimshaw, of Forton; H. Townsend, of Darwen; and his tutor, Mr. Lewis, took part in the service. During the long period of forty years he laboured here, resigning in 1841, and dying at the house of his brother Daniel, in Hertfordshire, on July 4th, 1843.¹ The Rev.

¹ The registers of Elswick Chapel are in the custody of the Registrar General, at Somerset House. Some of them are in a dilapidated half-burnt condition, and Mr. Edwards gives the following pathetic account of an accident which accounts for this:—"On the night," says he, "between the

Joshua Armitage, who had previously laboured for about six years at Barnsley, and had been trained at Airedale, came to Elswick in 1841. Like his predecessor, he laboured here for upwards of forty years. He resigned in 1877, and went to spend the remainder of his days in his native town of Heckmondwike, where he died on the 22nd of December, 1885, at the age of eighty years, over fifty of which he spent in the Congregational ministry. His great work at Elswick was the building of the present handsome church, whose tall spire is a conspicuous object for many miles in the Fylde district. The memorial stone was laid on July 30th, 1873, by Sir James Watts, and amongst the speakers at the evening meeting was Edmund Harrison, Esq., a descendant of the Rev. Cuthbert Harrison. The land was given by Miss Harrison, another descendant. The plan of the new building is cruciform, its total length being 71 feet; width of nave, 26 feet; width across transepts, 46 feet; height from floor to wall-plate, 16 feet; height from floor to apex of roof, 33 feet. The turret, "11 feet square and 82 feet high to top of vane, was erected at the sole cost of R. C. Richards, Esq., J.P., of Clifton Lodge, near Preston, in memory of his relatives, whose remains lie buried in the old ground. The lower, or ground floor stage of this turret is reserved as a mortuary chamber, having a moulded archway connecting it with the porch, and handsome wrought-iron gates therein. Three sides of this chamber are fitted with recessed panels, each containing an inscription slab of statuary marble; and the whole forms an arcade of moulded and carved stonework, with polished serpentine marble shafts. The ceiling of the chamber is groined in stone, with deeply moulded ribs, spring-

2nd and 3rd of March, 1836, I was in my study, perusing our church and register books, on a large round table, which stood on a long pillar, supported by 3 short feet. I had for years been much afflicted with the gravel disease, which occasioned me to take much opiate medicine. Some time after midnight I found myself on the floor, where I had lain for a considerable time. When I was able to get up I found the table, which had fallen with its edge on the fire, blazing, and all on it having slid down on the fire. I began to rescue the books as soon as I could; but to my indescribable sorrow I found the church book was all consumed, and the register book within what you see. In my fright I burnt both my hands by extinguishing the flames. It has been a grievous affliction to me, the effect of which on my spirits and health I have not lost to this day."

ing from carved corbels ; and the floor is laid with rich encaustic tiles. The windows are filled with stained glass. The upper part of the turret is utilised as a ventilating shaft.”¹ The chapel was opened on the 28th May, 1874, by the Rev. J. A. Macfadyen, M.A., of Manchester. Mr. Armitage was followed by the Rev. H. W. Stranger, now residing at Sale, near Manchester, without pastoral charge. He remained only a little over twelve months, and was succeeded in 1880 by the present pastor, Rev. John Robinson. His previous pastorates have been at Tosside, Tockholes, and Ramsbottom, at each of which places he laboured seven years. The number of worshippers in connection with this church in 1717, as already stated, was 290 ; the present building will accommodate about 300, and good congregations collect weekly to hear the earnest sermons of their minister. This little church, indeed, shows no signs of decrepitude and age ; in the third century of its existence it appears as youthful and vigorous as at any previous time. Its faithful witnessing during so many years is bearing fruit in the shape of vigorous Congregational churches at Blackpool, Lytham, Kirkham, and other places ; and it is to be hoped its wealthier children will ever accord unto it the respect, sympathy, and affection to which it is justly entitled.

II.—KIRKHAM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

NONCONFORMITY in Kirkham, as in almost every other part of the Fylde, may be said to have originated in the labours of the little Congregational Church at Elswick. No church in the county has done more in the way of evangelising the surrounding districts than it. That Kirkham may justly claim to be its spiritual offspring is evident from the following passage, extracted from a brief historic sketch written by the Rev. T. R. Davies, late of Kirkham :—

“It was in the year 1805 the Independent cause took form and being. Various unsuccessful attempts had been previously made, at periods considerably distant from each other, by the Revs. Senier and Edwards, of Elswick, and P. S. Charrier, of Lancaster,

¹ “Congregational Year Book” for 1874. p. 423.

to establish a preaching station here. But during this year the Revs. David Edwards, of Elswick, and Morgan and Walker, of Preston, agreed to preach here in succession once a fortnight. This arrangement continued until the following Spring, when being excluded from the place where they had officiated, they were obliged for a season to suspend their labours. But in the following autumn it pleased the Lord to give them the sole and peaceable possession of the room from which they had been shut out.”¹

Corroborative of this is a statement in the first report of the Lancashire Congregational Union, dated January, 1808. Under the heading of the Fylde it says:—

“We may, in a measure, attribute (under God) the present faintly-dawning gleams of light and liberty breaking forth here, to the desires, prayers, and endeavours of the friends at Elswick, as well as to the efforts of Mr. Walker, of Preston.”²

On the formation of the Lancashire Congregational Union, towards the close of 1806, steps were at once taken towards evangelising the rural districts, and in May, 1807, the Rev. James Morrow was appointed by the Union to Poulton, and one of his stations was Kirkham. In the report of 1808, already referred to, there is the following note about Kirkham:—

“It seems there is a prospect that in time a permanent interest may be established. The attendance there is good and respectable. The chief want is more room. Already they have made collections in behalf of the union. But what is still better is that the Gospel has come in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. These accounts are confirmed by the united testimony of Mr. Walker and Mr. Edwards. Instead, therefore, of being depressed, let us thank God for what He has done, and take courage.”

The room from which the Kirkham friends were in the first instance “shut out,” but of which they eventually obtained “sole and peaceable possession,” was situated in Slater’s passage, and is

¹ “Fylde Congregational Magazine” for 1887.

² P. 6.

still standing. "It was a dismal place," says Mr. Davies, "though it might have been called by the dignified name of an upper chamber." It is still known as the Old Chapel. The services were conducted on Sunday evenings. "In 1811" [should be 1810], he continues, "a small chapel was erected and opened for Divine worship. This structure was procured through the exertions of the Rev. D. Edwards, of Elswick, and Mr. Henry Crook, of Clifton, on land originally obtained for the purpose, by the kindness of Mr. Roger Charnock, of Treales." Mr. Charnock, it deserves to be stated, was the father of Ellen, wife of the Rev. John Richards, of Walker-fold, and great grandfather of the wife of the late Mr. W. H. Bowdler, J.P., of Kirkham. The chapel referred to by Mr. Davies was opened for worship in November, 1810, when the Revs. W. M. Walker, of Preston, and James Morrow were the preachers. It was said to be a wet day, but there was a large congregation. "The novelty of our new chapel," says Mr. Morrow, "excited a good deal of attention at Kirkham at first when it was opened. Numbers crowded to it; but the congregations bore little resemblance to an assembly met for the worship of God. Curiosity being now gratified we have fewer, but we are seldom incommoded in our public devotions. At present the place is pretty well filled on Sabbath evenings; and I think that there are lately some instances of persons being turned to God."¹ The interest here grew, and became so important that it was thought advisable for Mr. Morrow to remove from Poulton to Kirkham, and that the former place should be made into a distinct station. The Kirkham people also petitioned the Committee of the Union for their minister to reside in their midst. Accordingly, in May, 1812, Mr. Morrow removed to Kirkham. Writing on January 4th, 1813, he says:—

My settling at Kirkham, to which I removed in May, and commencing preaching regularly on the several parts of the Sabbath, stirred up some opposition. A few who used to attend when we had preaching only in the Evening now left us. We have, however, frequently on Sabbath mornings, from 90 to 100 hearers—in the afternoons, rather fewer, and in the evenings sometimes more. Our congregations in the morning and afternoon are principally made up of persons from the neighbouring Villages. It is the opinion of those who attend, as well as mine, that we have lately increased.

¹ "Union Report," January 1812, p. 6.

Amongst those who attend at Kirkham are many serious characters; and some who have only lately given decisive evidence that they are the called of God. I am convinced of the necessity of these persons being joined together in Church fellowship; and I shall shortly form them into a church. During the Summer I preached at Freckleton, a village about three miles hence, once a fortnight on Sabbath evenings. Many could not get into the little room in which we met. I now preach in our Chapel three times on the Sabbath, and hold a prayer meeting on Wednesday evening in my own house. At Clifton we have a prayer meeting once a fortnight on Tuesday evening, when I deliver a short discourse. . . . There are a number of places besides these where I preach occasionally.¹

Shortly after this, in the same year, Mr. Morrow left Kirkham for Leek, in Staffordshire, where he continued to labour until his death in 1836. He was succeeded at Kirkham by a Mr. Capper, who had previously been engaged by the Union at Orrell, near Wigan. Writing on the 24th of January, 1814, to the Union committee, Mr. Capper says of Kirkham:—

“As I had no knowledge of this place before the 14th of last November, when I came to supply here, and having to visit my family at Orrell until a fortnight ago, when I removed them to this place, I am not therefore sufficiently prepared to give you a full statement of our affairs. My health is much better since I came here, and if it please the Lord to establish it, I intend (God willing) as soon as I can, to get into Freckleton, Wray Green, Weeton, Trails, and Clifton; they are all, except Trails, about three miles each in distance from the chapel, and we have a few from most of them that attend. There are very few that come to hear out of the town. The chapel is very badly situated, in a back lane, with a bad road to it, and what is far worse, it is so very damp as to endanger any delicate person's life to attend in it. We have got a stove in it the last week, which we hope will be of some service. I sincerely wish we had a better place. There is now ground to dispose of in a very eligible situation; I mention this not merely for our better accommodation (though much needed), but conceive that there would shortly be an increase that would enable the place to support itself.”²

¹ “Union Report,” January, 1813, p. 4.

² “Union Report,” 1814, pp. 6, 7.

Mr. Capper left Kirkham in 1816, and was for some time at Tosside, near Settle. But not being properly invited to that place, and remaining against the wishes of many of the people, frequent disorderly scenes ensued. His successor at Kirkham was the Rev. Robert Morris Griffiths, about the middle of the year 1816. It is said that he had the pleasure, particularly in the evening, to see the chapel nearly full soon after his settlement. Clifton, Newton, Freckleton, and Inglewhite, are named in the Report for 1817 as places where Mr. Griffiths occasionally preached. A church consisting of twenty members was formed on Christmas Day, 1817; and at that time, it is said, "four adult schools, two for males and two for females, have been established in this town, which are conducted and supported by the members of Mr. G.'s congregation."¹ For the building in which they had worshipped they paid £15 11s 6d. per annum, and it is said to be in every way unsuitable, consequently Zion Chapel was erected in 1818. The following is an account of the opening service :—

"On the 12th of August, 1818, a neat and convenient building, called Zion Chapel, was opened for public worship at Kirkham; on which occasion the Rev. Robert Griffiths was solemnly recognised as the pastor of the church assembling there. The Rev. P. S. Charrier addressed the minister from 2 Tim. ii., 21, and the Rev. T. Raffles preached to the people from 1 Cor. xvi., 10. Mr Raffles preached again in the evening from Ps. cxviii., 22. The very commendable exertions of the people themselves, aided by the generosity of Mr. Crook, of Clifton, who relinquished the whole of his interest in the place where they formerly assembled to the amount of £150, have been so effectually seconded by the liberality of the friends of the Redeemer throughout the county, that it is expected the debt now remaining will very soon be entirely discharged without any further appeal to the public, except for the fulfilment of promises already made. The building is legally vested in trust for the use of the church and congregation."²

The report for 1824 states that during the past year a new gallery

¹ "Union Report," April, 1818, p. 5.

² "Union Report," April, 1819, p. 7.

had been erected in the chapel and "paid for," and that some two hundred families were weekly supplied with tracts taken round by the young people.

Mr. Griffiths seems to have been in labours abundant and in trials oft. Family and personal affliction frequently prevented him from doing all he wished, and his reports contain many references to them, also to "difficulties of an unpleasant nature" within the church. The Union grants to the church, which began with £52 10s., were gradually diminished until February, 1832, when at a meeting of the Preston District, held at Lancaster, a letter from the Kirkham Church was read, expressing gratitude for kind and continued aid from the Union funds, bearing testimony also to the useful labours of the pastor, and requesting that a sum of not less than £15 be asked on their behalf from the general meeting shortly to be held. The following resolutions were passed:—

"Resolved, on the motion of Mr. Ormandy, seconded by Rev. D. T. Carnson,—That it be recommended to the general annual meeting to grant this District Committee £15 for the church at Kirkham during the year ensuing. And resolved also, on the motion of Rev. D. T. Carnson, seconded by Rev. R. Slate.—That this meeting, impressed with a high sense of the activity, zeal, and liberality of the church and congregation at Kirkham, beg to remind them, that what is voted to them will very probably be withdrawn from some other place less able, and urgently recommend them to endeavour immediately to declare their independence of the funds of the County Union."

This latter resolution, so skilfully worded, appears to have had the desired effect, for the church sent a letter to the Union dated March 28th, 1832, in which they "proposed to do without the aid of the Union for the coming year."

After a period of thirty-two years' ministerial labour at Kirkham, Mr. Griffiths resigned his charge on the 30th of April, 1848. A few notes further about this good man may appropriately be appended here. He was born at Llanfyllin, Wales, in 1779, and,

¹ "Minutes of the Preston District" for February, 1832.

being wishful to learn the English language, came to Manchester for that purpose, when only twenty years of age. There he attended the ministry of the Rev. W. Roby, and eventually became one of his students. In 1811 he was settled over the Congregational Church in Flag Lane, Warrington, whence he removed to Kirkham. After his retirement from Kirkham he lived for ten years in the district, part of the time in Blackpool, and rendered such occasional help to his ministerial brethren as he was able. He died at Kirkham on the 12th of August, 1859, in his eightieth year, and was buried in the Kirkham parish churchyard, where his wife had been interred some years previously.¹ "He was a good man," says Mr. Davies, "and his name is still revered deeply in Kirkham, and several excellent oil paintings of him adorn the houses of the people, who cherish his memory with great tenderness and affection."

The Rev. Robert Best was his successor. He was born at Newcastle-on-Tyne on May 20th, 1823, and educated at Homerton, then under the presidency of Dr. Pye Smith. Mr. Best spent about six months in Fleetwood as minister there, and came to Kirkham almost immediately on the retirement of Mr. Griffiths. His ordination took place here on May 30th, 1848, when the Revs. J. Armitage, of Elswick; Dr. Saml. Davidson, of Lancashire College; R. Slate, of Preston; Dr. Raffles, of Liverpool; R. Fletcher, of Manchester, and others took part in the service. During his ministry a fierce Church Rates conflict took place at Kirkham, in which Mr. Best played a prominent part. The following is his own account of the matter:—

We had a fierce conflict against Church Rates at Kirkham. My rate was 93d., which I conscientiously refused to pay. I offered 5s. as a voluntary contribution, but a rate for a religious object I would not acknowledge. I was summoned to appear before the magistrates at Preston, and did appear, followed by the issue of a warrant for a distrain upon my furniture. Some of the people thought I would have to go to prison. One farmer's wife came with tears in her eyes, and implored my wife to get me to pay, as she did not want her dear minister to go to prison and have his hair cropped. However, it did not come to that. Two policemen came one morning with the superintendent, who was a Roman Catholic. In my absence he expressed deepest mortification and regret at having to make a distrain, and politely asked my wife what they must take? She, brave creature, replied that if

¹ "Congregational Year Book," 1860

she told them what to take that would be sanctioning their proceedings. The superintendent then turned hurriedly to his men, telling them to take the chairs from the parlour they had entered. They swept off eight mahogany chairs, valued at £4, leaving Mrs. Best the one on which she sat. These were sold in Kirkham Market Place by a local auctioneer at the very time that I was passing at the head of a funeral to the Church which they were taken to support.¹

Mr. Best had a fellow sufferer in the Rev. Benjamin Whillock, Primitive Methodist minister at Kirkham. The case was tried at the Town Hall, Preston, April 14th, 1849, before J. Cunliffe, J. Bairstow, and Wm. Shawe, Esqrs. Mr. Whillock's rate was 5d. and Mr. Best's 9½d. Both appeared to defend their case in person, and both were fined 7s. 6d. costs, besides being ordered to pay the rate.²

With the senior curate, the Rev. Henry Wray, M.A., he also had some controversy on ecclesiastical matters, which led to his publication of "Congregational Independency as old as the Apostles." In 1852 Mr. Best removed to Mawdsley Street, Bolton, being recognised as pastor there on the 18th of August of that year. Here he laboured until his death, which took place somewhat suddenly on August 3rd, 1887, at the age of sixty-four years. Few men have been better known and more beloved than he. His genial disposition was such that no young minister ever felt diffident in his company. He has left at Mawdsley Street, in the handsome schools and chapel there, noble monuments of his industry and worth, and it will take many generations before his personality will be forgotten by the people of Bolton. In December, 1852, the Rev. Charles McCordy Davies came to succeed Mr. Best at Kirkham. He was born at Swansea, August 30, 1805, and for a while had charge of a day school at Rodborough, where he commenced preaching. His first pastorate, however, was at Wheatley, near Oxford, whence he came to Kirkham. He left Kirkham in November, 1855, for Market Place Church, Wallingford, Berks, where he remained until 1873, when he retired from the ministry. He subsequently resided at Swansea and Liverpool. He died at the latter place March 15th, 1885, and was buried in Smithdown

¹ "Memoir of the Rev. R. Best," by the Rev. J. Johnston, pp. 39-40.

² *Preston Guardian*, April 21, 1849.

Cemetery. The Rev. John Morrison Howie entered upon ministerial duty at Kirkham in November, 1856. "His ministry," says Mr. Davies, "was brought to an abrupt termination in the year 1858, and he proceeded to South Australia." Upon the resignation of Mr. Howie the church gave a unanimous call to Mr. Parry, a town missionary in Liverpool, who had been highly recommended by the Rev. Dr. Raffles. The invitation was accepted, but Mr. Parry was attacked by fever, and died in Liverpool, his funeral sermon being preached by Dr. Raffles on the very day on which he should have commenced his ministrations at Kirkham. So highly was Mr. Parry esteemed in Liverpool that at his funeral the procession to the place of interment was upwards of a mile in length. In March, 1860, the Rev. William Knox commenced his Kirkham ministry. He was born at Canterbury, December 8th, 1818, his parents being Wesleyans. His early pastorates were in the county of Northumberland, Haydon Bridge, Amble, and Berwick-on-Tweed. From the latter place he removed to Dixon Green, Farnworth, and after three years' labour to Kirkham. The Church Rate contest commenced during the ministry of Mr. Best, was renewed in Mr. Knox's pastorate, and many stirring and eventful scenes were witnessed in the town. It was believed by the opponents of the rate levied in 1861 that it was an illegal one, and payment was refused. The then vicar and churchwardens, Rev. W. L. Hussey and Messrs. T. L. Birley and James Barrett, summoned nearly one hundred persons who had refused to pay the rate, amongst others Messrs. Richards and Bowdler, for a rate of 9½d. These gentlemen were dragged to the Ecclesiastical Court at York, where, after tedious proceedings, the rate was declared by the Chancellor, June, 1863, to be an illegal one. It was these well-fought battles by the Nonconformists of Kirkham that so largely contributed to the abolition of Church Rates by Parliament.

In December, 1866, Mr. Knox resigned his charge at Kirkham for Kingsland Chapel, Bristol. Subsequently he laboured at West Liverpool Street and Chapel Street, Salford, where he died November 19th, 1883, after a ministry of thirty-one years. His successor at Kirkham was the Rev. Samuel Gladstone, who received a unanimous invitation to the vacant pastorate in June, 1868. He

was trained privately, and entered the ministry in 1843. He was at Horncastle, Lincolnshire, from 1848 to 1853; at Goole from 1854 to 1868, when he removed for Kirkham, as already stated. He left here in 1875 for Leiston, in Suffolk, and now resides at Sleaford, Lincolnshire, without pastoral charge. His father was the Rev. George Gladstone, for a period of forty-five years minister of Zion Chapel, Lincoln; and his brother, the Rev. George Gladstone, who preceded him a few years as minister at Leiston. The Rev. T. R. Davies, to whose little sketch of the history of the church the writer acknowledges his indebtedness, commenced ministerial work at Kirkham in February, 1876. He was educated at Brecon College, laboured previously at Dalton and Poulton, both stations in connection with the Preston District of the County Union, and resigned his charge at Kirkham at the close of 1888. He has been pastor of the Knowle Green Congregational Church since the first Sunday in July, 1889. The present minister—Rev. H. H. Theobald, a student from Lancashire College, entered upon his labours here October 13th 1889, and was ordained on Wednesday, the 24th of that month.

The chapel at Kirkham is a plain brick building, measuring about 65ft. by 45ft., with small windows arched at the top. It is capable of seating about 350 persons. The pews are old-fashioned, deep and straight-backed, about a dozen being square family pews. It is interesting and noteworthy that the pews occupied by the founders of the chapel remain still in the occupation of their descendants—the Bowdlers maternally in the fifth generation, and the Brynings and Crooks each in the fourth generation. The large pew in front of the pulpit is occupied by the choir and harmonium. There is a gallery at the front for the Sunday school children. The pulpit is in character with the pews, made of oak, antique in style, deep and ornamented, and is considered a fine piece of workmanship. Over it is a white marble tablet, bearing the following inscription:—

In memory of the
REV. R. M. GRIFFITHS,

Who was the faithful, laborious, and successful pastor of this church from
1816 to 1848, and by whose zealous efforts this place of worship
was erected.

Died Aug. 2nd, 1859, aged 80 years.

“Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

The walls are bare and unsightly. As previously stated, it was built in 1818, during the pastorate of the Rev. R. M. Griffiths, is situated in a back lane, and not easily found by a stranger. There is an open space in front, enclosed by a wall and gate. It is adorned by a few shrubs, and overshadowed by eight elm trees, which were planted by the Rev. W. Hackett, who at that time was a deacon of the church. On entering this space, to the right is the Sunday school building, consisting of two rooms, the one above for girls, and that on the floor for boys. It was converted into this form out of two old cottages. On the left-hand side there is a pathway leading to the vestry and the burial ground behind the chapel. This ground was bought and opened for interments in 1850, the first interment being the old chapel keeper, November 7th, 1851. To the right of the burial ground are the manse and garden, and at the extreme western end is a croft, bought by the late R. C. Richards, Esq., J.P., and presented to the church as a site for a new chapel. All the property is free from debt. There is also belonging to the church a fine schoolroom at Wesham, capable of holding about 500 persons, built and presented to the church by B. Whitworth, Esq., the land being given by Mr. R. C. Richards. Until recently it has been used only for tea meetings and entertainments, but on Sunday, April 13th, of this year evangelistic work was commenced here by the pastor. The Brynings, Bowdlers, Crooks, and Richardses have rendered invaluable service to the church here, and, through it, to the denomination.

A few sentences about the old Sunday school will not be without interest. In the early part of this article it was stated that in 1817 there were four adult schools in Kirkham connected with the Congregational Church. The Union Report for 1819 states that these had been given up because of the "non-attendance of the learners," and that a Sunday school had been established in October of the last year.

In 1834 the present school premises were purchased and adapted for the purpose. An appeal to friends of the denomination was made, and the money required obtained. The appeal was endorsed as follows:—"The knowledge we have of the active zeal and constant liberality of the friends at Kirkham, and our hearty approval of the efforts made by them to instruct the rising genera-

tion, induce us to commend this case to the friends of early religious instruction.—R. Slate, Preston; D. T. Carnson, Preston; D. Edwards, Elswick; Wm. Jones, Bolton. May 22nd, 1834.” The first scholar named in the oldest school attendance book, still preserved, is Richard Whiteside, who entered October 26th, 1828. He died about three years ago; but his widow, Mrs. Lydia Whiteside, herself a teacher in the school fifty-six years ago, and an attendant at the chapel for nearly seventy years, still survives. For about seventy years the scholars have had a tea party and treat on the annual club day—the first week in July—and this is still kept up. In 1834 the attendance was about 200, and it is much the same at present. Many have gone out of the school to fill ministerial and other prominent positions in this country and the colonies.

Joined with Kirkham in the Lancashire Congregational Calendar is Cornah Row, concerning which a sentence or two will be appropriate here. The chapel, which bears the name of Ebenezer, is situated in the parish or township of Greenhalgh, about half-way between Kirkham and Elswick. It lies a little off the road to the right, and is approached by a long avenue lined with trees, which give it a picturesque appearance. The chapel, with sitting accommodation for about 100 people, was built in 1851 by Mrs. Garlick, of Greenhalgh, a member of the church at Kirkham, and was presented by her to the denomination, with an endowment sufficient to maintain one service every Sabbath, and accommodation and refreshment for the preacher. The property is invested in the hands of twelve trustees, half of whom are from Elswick, the other half from Kirkham. The Elswick minister supplies here in the evening during the summer months, and in the winter months service is conducted in the afternoon by the Kirkham minister. No collections were made in this place until very recently. A false impression prevailed among the parishioners that the will of Mrs. Garlick forbid collections of any sort, and this objection was always urged whenever an attempt was made to introduce one. Some time ago the Rev. T. R. Davies, the Kirkham minister, procured a harmonium for the chapel, and arranged an opening service. When the collection was about to be taken, one of the congregation protested against it, on the supposed authority of Mrs. Garlick's will. Mr. Davies then said he would make the collection in the

road outside the chapel. And after closing the service, he proceeded, hat in hand, outside the gates, and made a good collection on the road. On another occasion he announced a collection for the County Union. When the time came, he asked two farmers to make the collection, but they demurred; so Mr. Davies said he would make it himself, and went into the vestry to get his hat for the purpose, but on his return the congregation had suddenly disappeared. Two souls had, however, remained, and between them they made over 8s., and that was the first collection ever sent from that chapel to the Church Aid Society. The Rev. William Hackett was once stationed here for a short time, but with that exception Cornah Row has been supplied by the Elswick and Kirkham Churches.

III.—LYTHAM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

LYTHAM differs from Blackpool, its neighbour and rival watering place, in at least one important respect: it is of considerable age. Not, of course, in its present form. The 19th century has witnessed a wonderful growth here as elsewhere. Captain Latham, writing in 1799, says:—"The present village of Lytham, previous to its becoming frequented by bathers, was an obscure place; and from the houses being low, and formed of mud and clay, covered with straw, it gave a stranger more the idea of an Indian town than the appearance of an English village. Of late years, however, the spirit of improvement has manifested itself here as well as in most watering places; many convenient and excellent houses have been erected in the village and on the marsh, for the purpose of accommodating such families as prefer being in private; and more are in contemplation. There likewise have been erected two most extensive hotels [these were the Wheat Sheaf and Clifton], containing comfortable and spacious apartments for the convenience of such strangers, as may prefer being in public. . . . Many excellent new shops are to be seen ornamenting the streets of the village, the windows of which display much taste, in the disposition and

arrangement of their various commodities. For the preservation of good order and regularity, so essentially necessary in all places, a new house of confinement has been erected in Douglas Street, containing distinct apartments for the punishment of offenders of both sexes."¹ Writing to-day Captain Latham would have a different story to tell. The little village has become a town of considerable size, which is much sought after by holiday-makers from all parts of England. Yet though its largest growth has been during the present century, long, long ago it had a name and an importance. The village or hamlet, or whatever it may have been called in those early times, was known in the days of William the Conqueror as *Lidun*, and contained two carucates of land. Thornber gives Lidun as from the Anglo-Saxon *lade*, "signifying a river emptying itself into the sea, and commonly attached to towns situated on the mouth of rivers, which is the case in this instance. The termination, *tun*, in lapse of time might easily be exchanged for *ham*."² In later documents it appears as Lethum. The following sentence from Baines will show that the statement about its early importance is true:—"The district," says he, "belonged about 1190 to Richard Fitz Roger, supposed to have been a Banastre, who gave 'to God and the monks of Durham all my land at Lythum, with the church of the same *viz*, and all things belonging to that church,' that they might found a Benedictine cell there to the honour of St. Mary and St. Cuthbert, which was erected accordingly."³ That sentence is very inviting, but neither a history of the ancient Episcopal Church nor of the "Benedictine cell" must be attempted here. A much humbler and easier task is ours, viz., a sketch of the rise and progress of Congregationalism at this place. Congregationalists were somewhat tardy in introducing their form of religious organisation into Lytham. Catholicism and Episcopalianism are of long standing in the town. In 1820 the Baptists also had a small chapel. According to Porter it stood "on part of the ground now occupied by the premises of Mr. Edmondson, draper, the remaining portion being covered by the residence of that gentleman's father, who owned the chapel, and acted as its

¹ Quoted in Whittle's "Marina" (Lytham), pp. 38, 39.

² "History of Blackpool," p. 337.

³ "History of Lancashire" (Ed. 1870), Vol. ii., p. 503.

minister. The chapel would hold about thirty worshippers."¹ The Wesleyans, too, had a chapel here in 1846, but it was more than ten years after this before steps were taken to bring Congregationalism hither. The first effort in that direction was at a meeting of the Preston District held at Lancaster in February, 1858. The Rev. R. Slate made a statement "to the effect that there was no immediate probability that this place would become a field of labour for the County Union, as there was no one on the spot to take up the matter." The meeting, however, "was impressed with the importance of making an effort to open this place to the evangelistic operations of the Union, and it was moved by Mr. E. B. Dawson, and seconded by the Rev. J. Armitage, that £50 be requested for the preaching of the Gospel at Lytham."² In the following year it was resolved to ask for a grant of £60. At the February meeting of 1860, the following resolution was passed:—"This meeting, impressed with the importance of some steps being immediately taken for the introduction of the Gospel into Lytham, would earnestly urge the Executive Committee to seize the earliest opportunity of carrying into effect this desirable object."³ The recommendations of the Preston District respecting Lytham do not seem to have met with any large encouragement at the hands of the County Union. It was not until the chapel was erected in 1862 that it was accepted by the Union as a station. Whether previous to that time services were held I do not know; but if so, they would only be quite occasional. The following relates to the building of the chapel:—

"LYTHAM.—This interesting watering place was strongly recommended to the attention of the Executive Committee at the last district meeting as affording a promising sphere for the operations of the Union. At this meeting [1862] Mr. Bryning stated that the foundation stone of a new chapel was laid in August [October] last, and that satisfactory progress was being made in the erection. It is to be one of the memorial chapels in connection with others which were commemorative of the bicentenary of Nonconformity. A considerable portion of the cost has been promised or obtained,

¹ "History of the Fylde," p. 439.

² "Minutes of the Preston District" for 1858.

³ *Ibid.*, for 1860.

and it was moved by the Rev. G. W. Clapham, and seconded by E. B. Dawson, Esq., that £50 be requested for Lytham for the ensuing year."¹

The land for the chapel was leased for 99 years from Colonel Clifton, the lord of the manor, who also contributed £25 towards the building fund. He further promised that when his son and heir came of age the lease should be extended to 999 years. The foundation stone was laid on Thursday, October 17th, 1861, by Sir James Watts, of Manchester, who was a prime mover in commencing the interest here, and who started the subscription list with £100. The following is a description of the projected building :

"The chapel is in the decorated Gothic style, and will be a handsome building, faced with rough Longridge stone, in irregular courses, the window and door dressings, copings, water tables, &c., being formed of the same description of stone 'worked fair.' At one angle of the front there is to be a tower and spire of stone 87 feet high, the lower part of which will form the principal of three front entrances to the chapel, and contain the staircase to a small end gallery. At the back of the chapel will be a polygonal apse, with ornamental ceiling ; and behind this there is, on the ground floor, to be a minister's vestry, heating chamber, and other conveniences, and above, a room sufficiently capacious for use as a schoolroom for the present. In addition to the side windows, the chapel will be lighted by one of large proportions in the front gable. The roof will be formed with arched ribs of stained wood, ornamented with dog-tooth edges, the ceiling being panelled, and following in some degree the outline of the ribs. The internal fittings are also to be of stained work, and will be of a simple and pleasing character, which it is believed will give to the interior a very satisfactory effect."² The cost of the chapel, including iron fencing and gates, heating, lighting, ventilation, and laying out of the ground was £2,283. The architects were Messrs. Poulton and Woodman, of Reading ; and the building was erected by the firm of Cooper and Tullis, of Preston. The chapel was opened for public worship on July 31st, 1862.³

¹ "Minutes of the Preston District" for 1862..

² "Congregational Year Book," 1862.

³ *Ibid.*, for 1863.

The following passage, which gives the first statistics supplied by this church to the Union, will be read with interest :—

The return from Lytham stated the population to be 3,200, chapel accommodation for 350 persons and for 100 scholars; number of sittings let, 49; number in attendance on divine worship in the summer, morning, 57, evening, 93. In the winter, morning 30, evening 50. Total paid for the ministry for one half-year, £54 3s. Raised for general purposes, £44 os. 5d. Amount granted by the Union last year, £50; £25 of that grant were only received. The ministry was not entered on until the opening of the chapel in August last. Amount requested this year £60. The meeting felt a deep interest in the cause of Christ at Lytham, as every district meeting for years has been concerned for a place of worship belonging to our denomination to be built there. It was moved by the Rev. F. Evans, and seconded by Mr. R. Bowdler, that £50 be requested for Lytham for the ensuing year.¹

The first pastor of this new interest was the Rev. William Lewis. He was educated at Hackney College, and entered the ministry in 1841, as co-pastor with the Rev. W. Richardson, at Frampton, in Gloucestershire. In 1846, Mr. Richardson resigned, and Mr. Lewis became sole pastor. He remained here until Midsummer, 1864, when he removed to Lytham. Here he was engaged only for two years, and so, in the minutes for February, 1866, we have the following :—

“The Rev. W. Lewis, whose engagement as the minister at this station for the period of two years will terminate in the summer of this year, contemplates a change, and will seek a charge elsewhere. He has lived in the affection and respect of his brethren in this district, and has enjoyed happy relations with the people to whom he has ministered the Gospel of Christ.”

Mr. Lewis removed from Lytham in May, 1866, to Cockermouth, the oldest Congregational Church in Cumberland. He remained there until 1872, when he resigned, and for a little time was resident in Blackburn, without pastoral charge. In January, 1875, he resumed labour amongst his old friends at Frampton until 1879, when he retired from the ministry. He now resides at Weston-super-Mare. Mr. Lewis is the author of the “History of the Congregational Church, Cockermouth,” and also of a short sketch

¹ “Minutes of the Preston District” for 1863.

of the Frampton Congregational Church, published in 1876 in connection with the Centenary celebration. The Rev. Samuel Clarkson followed in 1867. He was the son of the Rev. Abraham Clarkson, for many years Congregational minister at Bingley in Yorkshire. He received his education at Spring Hill College, and settled first at Howard Street, Sheffield. Thence he removed to Bridgnorth, afterwards to Salford, then to Bocking, whence he came to Lytham. He laboured at Lytham until September 26th, 1880, when he resigned, and spent the remainder of his days at Ilkley in retirement. He was suddenly carried away by death on the 14th of October, 1886, at the age of sixty-six years, and interred at Batley Cemetery. Mr. Clarkson was the author of several printed sermons and lectures; and he edited a little memorial volume containing a sketch of the life and character of his brother, Richard Clarkson, who died March 19th, 1879. The volume was printed by Mather, of Chapel Walks, Preston, and Church Road, Lytham, and contains one or two sonnets by the editor.

In 1882, the Rev. Thomas Taylor, M.A., succeeded Mr. Clarkson. He is a native of Oldham, his parents being of the Episcopal persuasion, and his ministerial training he received at Cambridge. He began work as a missionary at Shanghai, China, in 1877, but through impaired health, after a few years' service, was compelled to return to England. As already stated, he took charge of Lytham in 1882, though not with the intention of settling down to home work. His heart was in the mission field, and as soon as his own health and that of his wife permitted he resigned, and went to New Zealand in 1884. He is now resident without charge at Tasmania. His pastorate was brief but happy, and will not soon be forgotten by the Lytham people. In July, 1885, the present minister, Rev. T. H. Wright, from Lancashire College, entered upon duty here. He was ordained on October 14th, 1885, when the Revs. Professor Scott and Dr. Thomson, of the Lancashire College, together with the Revs. S. Clarkson and J. B. Hart, from Oundle, in Northamptonshire (Mr. Wright's former pastor), took part in the service. Lytham Congregationalism does not cover a long period of time, but its history is pleasant reading. The church has been happy with its ministers and happy with itself, and under the present ministry its vigour and usefulness are being continued.

IV.—NONCONFORMITY AT BISPHAM.

By far the oldest Nonconformist interest in the Fylde district is the Elswick Congregational Church ; but there was another whose beginning must be sought for also in the seventeenth century. Was, but is not now, and has not been for well on towards a century. This was at Bispham, near Blackpool, but before giving such information respecting it as has been obtained, it may be worth while devoting a few sentences to those who suffered ejection for their Nonconformity in this district by the Uniformity Act of 1662.

An account will be given later of the Congregational Church at Garstang, in which town the Rev. Isaac Ambrose ministered for a



THE VILLAGE OF BISPHAM.

time, and where his Nonconformity brought him to be amongst the number of the godly two thousand. A full account of this worthy man has already been given, and anything further respecting him will more properly come under Garstang. An even more noted champion of religious liberty in the seventeenth century was the Rev. Cuthbert Harrison, the Elswick minister. At Hambleton there was the Rev. Mr. Bullock, about whom I know nothing, only that he is named by Calamy as one of the ejected ; and the Rev. Joseph Harrison, at Lund Chapel, where he was “fixed in a dark corner,” suffered the same fate as his brother, Cuthbert Harrison. At St. Michael’s-le-Wyre was the Rev. Nathaniel Baxter, M.A., “a true Nathaniel,” says Calamy ; and considerably farther north, at Ellel, near Forton,

the Rev. Peter Atkinson, whose zeal for religion won for him the title of "Apostle of the North," both of whom went out in 1662. Besides these may be named Dr. Wm. Cole, of Preston, and the Rev. John Fisher, of Kirkham, afterwards at Bispham, who are mentioned by Calamy as persons conforming after they had suffered somewhat the rigours of the law. Driven forth from their places of worship, they instituted conventicles in out-of-the-way places, and it requires no great stretch of the imagination to see these "wanderers" seeking shelter amongst the woods near Garstang, where Ambrose ruminated, the marshy lands of the Fylde, much less accessible two centuries ago than now, and the wild moorland districts of Bleasdale and Littledale, whilst they worshipped God as conscience commanded. Ejected indeed, but not silenced: persecution opened up to many of them a wider ministry than they had enjoyed in time of peace, and in this way the seeds of Nonconformity were extensively sown. Dr. Halley has some pertinent sentences which are worth insertion here:—

"Many of the ejected ministers," says he, "soon obtained wider space for the exercise of their ministry than their own houses or the houses of their people afforded them. Invited to visit distant friends, they found many opportunities of conducting religious services in different towns and villages through which they travelled. They arranged preaching tours, and often included in their itinerancy a considerable extent of country. In places where no Puritan minister resided, and especially whence persecution had compelled one to remove, the travelling preacher often found a comfortable lodging, as well as an attentive congregation. As notice of these visits was sometimes previously given, their audiences became larger, and their religious services assumed a more popular and formal character. Domestic exercises grew into public services, social meetings into large gatherings, 'sweet repetitions' into long sermons, and the principles of an organised Nonconformity were gradually developed and brought into public notice.¹

Amongst these itinerant ministers who enriched Lancashire with their preachings was the celebrated Oliver Heywood. Born at

¹ "Lancashire Puritanism and Nonconformity." Vol. ii., p. 217

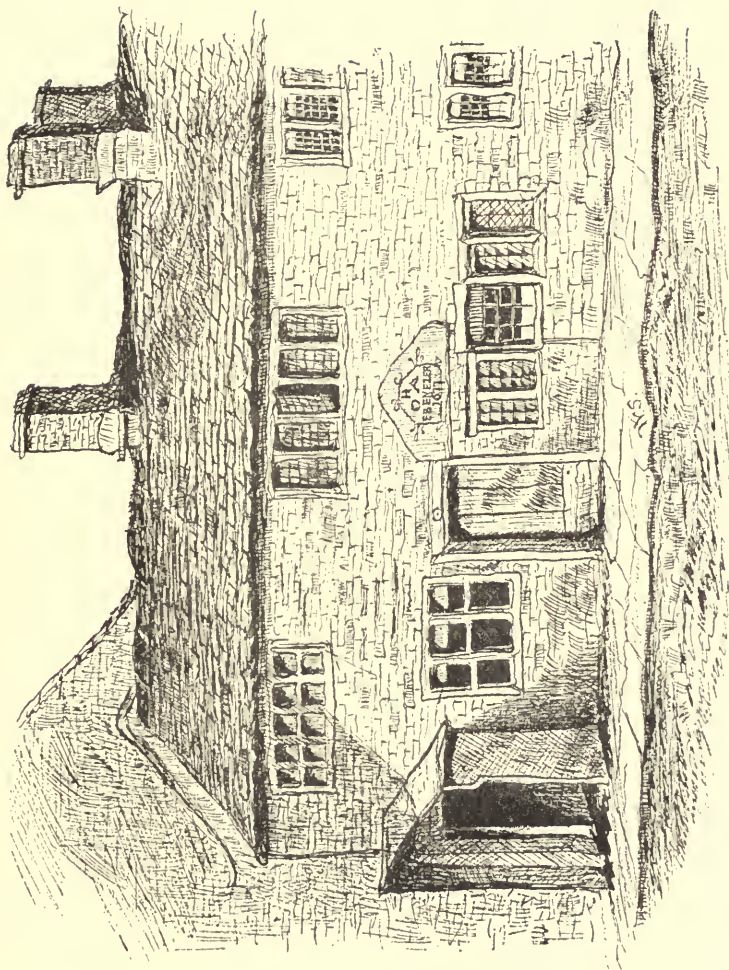
Little Lever, near Bolton, though his charge was in Yorkshire, he never forgot the county in which he first saw the light. "Wyresdale, Chippin, Poulton," and other places in Lancashire are named in his diaries as having been visited by him, where "Godly Dissenters have gained ground." Another noted Nonconformist in the person of the Rev. Henry Newcome, M.A., of Manchester, was a



OLIVER HEYWOOD.

frequent visitor to Preston and Hoghton Tower, and once at least he got as far as Poulton, as the following interesting passage from his diary shows:—

"[October 23rd, 1690]. We came late to Poulton on Thursday. The next morning we despatched with the school; found it well ordered, according to the charitable design. At both places we



NORTHOWRAM HOUSE, WHERE OLIVER HEYWOOD LIVED.

left many good books for poor families, a matter to be rejoiced in. We came back to Preston, and intended for Wigan that night, but Mr. Greene's occasions hindered till it was too late to go further, and so we lay at Walton Bridge."¹

Probably, also,, Thomas Jollie, Adam Martindale, John Howe, and Matthew Henry, all of whom were frequently at the Tower favoured this district with their occasional ministrations.

It has already been stated that the old Nonconformist interest at Bispham has become extinct. My researches respecting it have not been attended with any considerable success. The historians who have written upon the Fylde are bitterly disappointing. Porter's somewhat bulky "*History of the Fylde of Lancashire*," and even Fishwick's histories of Poulton, Kirkham, Bispham, and Garstang, issued in connection with the Chetham Society, are silent. By many historians only scant justice is done to Dissenting churches of all kinds. The works just mentioned purport to be histories of the districts whose names they bear, but not more than a sentence is given to the Nonconformist churches therein. Thornber alone, in his "*History of Blackpool*," published in 1837, mentions the old Presbyterian Chapel at Bispham. "Long before the erection," says he, "of the present Independent chapel called Bethel, in 1834, there existed an old Presbyterian place of worship, now entirely destroyed."² Respecting its origin I know nothing, nor do I know when it ceased to exist. In Volume IV. of Oliver Heywood's *Diaries*, edited by Mr. Horstall Turner, of Idle, is a list of students educated by Mr. Frankland, with notes upon them. These notes, Mr. Turner says, were compiled mainly by the Rev. Richard Slate, of Preston, who more than any man in his day dived down into denominational lore. There are two or three references in them to the Bispham Chapel deeds, but where these now are I have not been able to ascertain. If discovered they would throw considerable light upon this all-but-forgotten old Dissenting foundation. In Dr. Evans's list, drawn up between the years 1717 and 1729, appears "Bispham al Bisphamfield," with a congregation of 215 and 45 county voters. No reference is made to it in Bishop Gastrell's

¹ "Newcome's Autobiography" (Chetham Society, Vol. xxvii.), p. 273.

² P. 322.

"Notitia Cestriensis," but that proves nothing. Nor do any of the local antiquarians or friends versed in denominational literature know anything about it; but there is no doubt about the existence of a Dissenting chapel here nearly 200 years ago. Believing that some traditions might still linger in the neighbourhood, a short time ago I paid a visit to it to make inquiries. The oldest people could tell me nothing except that a lane leading to the right of the present little chapel on to the cliffs which line the sea is called "Chapel Lane," and was so called long before Bethel Chapel was built. That was suggestive; but the most satisfactory item of information was gleaned from an interesting old lady, living in Blackpool, who until quite recently has spent all her life at Bispham. Her father, Thomas Rae, she stated, used to tell about going to a Presbyterian or Unitarian Sunday school up Chapel Lane. He died about twenty-four years ago, and as he was eighty-nine years of age at the time, we are led back towards the last decade of the last century. She further stated that where the Albion Hotel, in Bispham, now stands was once a shoe shop belonging to Richard Hodgson, of whom more hereafter, which was built out of the stones of the old chapel. I can do little more than give the names of a few ministers who were stationed here in the latter part of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries. The first to be named is the Rev. E. Rothwell. He was one of Mr. Frankland's students, and was ordained June 7th, 1693, at which time he is said to be at "Poulton-in-the-Fylde, among a very ignorant but willing and numerous people."¹ There is no evidence that a Dissenting chapel has ever existed at Poulton previous to the present century; and if at that place at all it is probable that Mr. Rothwell was only resident there whilst he would serve the chapel at Bispham. He subsequently became minister at Tunley, near Wigan, where he trained several young men for the ministry, amongst them being the Rev J. Pilkington, who has been noticed in connection with Preston and Walton. He removed to Holcombe Chapel, near Bury, 1699, where he laboured until his death February 8th, 1731.

From the minutes of the First Classical Presbyterian Meetings the following is extracted:—

¹ Hunter's "Life of Heywood," p. 379.

"We recomend it to y^e Northern District, and particularly to Mr. Jolley's, sen. and jun., to Mr. Carrington, Mr. Aspinall, and Mr. Parr, to make choice of a minister to supply Bispham in the room of Mr. Dickenson for the present, who is to be paid with a sune already remitted for that place."¹

This was agreed upon at a meeting held at Warrington on August 8th, 1699. Who this Mr. Dickenson was I have no means of knowing. In Dr. Latham's list of students educated by Mr. Frankland, the Rev. Robert Hesketh is given as one of the Bispham ministers. He was a student in the Academy in 1692, and appeared as a candidate before the Lancashire ministers at Bolton, April 14th, 1696, and again in Manchester on the 4th of August in the same year. If, indeed, he ever was at Bispham, he could not have remained long, as he was at Platt Chapel, near Manchester, from 1704 to 1712. John Lomax appears in Dr. Evans's list as minister at Bispham some time between the years 1717-1729. He was probably educated by the Rev. John Chorlton, of Manchester, whose academy he entered March 21st, 1698. It is supposed that he was connected with the Lomaxes, of Little Lever, who married into Oliver Heywood's family. In Dr. Evans's list already mentioned, John Lomax appears as minister at Murrin-in-Field. Where this is I do not know, but it is somewhere in North Lancashire, and probably a misprint. At the ordination of Mr. Robert Hesketh (son of the Rev. Robert Hesketh, just named), at Carnforth, Mr. John Lomax was one of the ten who signed the ordination certificate, but the address cannot be disciphred.² I imagine the same person is intended in all these references. Next comes the Rev. Thomas Cooper. Both he and Mr. Lomax were here some time between 1717 and 1729. He removed to Forton, and died there. The next known minister was the Rev. John Hardy, a student of Dr. Rotheram, of Kendal. He is said to be the son of the Rev. Thomas Hardy, of Horwich; settled at Bispham in 1736, removed to Risley, near Warrington, and died in 1748.³ It is

¹ MS. copy of the "Minutes of the First Classis of the County; Palatine of Lancaster," made by Sir T. Baker, in the Free Reference Library Manchester.

² Peter Walkden's Diary, p. 24 and note.

³ List of Dr. Rotheram's Students in "Monthly Repository" for 1810.

curious to notice that a few years before this a Rev. Thomas Hardy is associated with Bispham Episcopal Church. Colonel Fishwick says :—

“Jonathan Hayton’s name appears in the registers [as curate of Bispham Church] frequently until 1718, after which the duties appear to have been performed by Thomas Hardy up to the year 1720, and subsequently by Christopher Albin.”¹

In a note upon this he says :—

“Baines (*Hist. of Lanc.*) called Thomas Hardy the curate of Bispham—he does not appear, however, to have been so, except as assistant to Mr. Hayton. He was (I take it) the Thomas Hardy, son of Thomas Hardy, of London, who entered Lincoln College, Oxford, 11 December, 1696, aged 17.”²

In another note he says :—

“Jonathan Hayton died in February, 1727-8, and in the Register of his burial he is styled ‘Minister of Bispham.’ Both Thomas Hardy and Christopher Albin are described sometimes (in the Register) as ‘Curate’ and sometimes as ‘Minister’ between 1720 and 1727, but it seems clear that Jonathan Hayton retained the curacy until his death.”³

Was this Thomas Hardy in any way connected with the Nonconformist Hardys of Bispham and Horwich? I am inclined to think so. Beyond this point I have no information. The existence of the chapel as a Sunday school until near the end of last century has already been noted; but no traces of the building can now be found.

Congregationalists began operations at Bispham in the early part of the present century. At the meeting of the Preston District at Elswick on October 6th, 1818, the following resolution was passed :

“That Mr. Bamber and the Rev. Mr. Speakman [minister at

¹ “History of Bispham” (Chetham Society, New Series, Vol. x.), p. 53.

² *Ibid.*, note 4.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 57, note 1.

Poulton] be requested to use their best endeavours to obtain a place for preaching in at Bispham, where Mr. Speakman has lately introduced the Gospel with pleasing prospects of success."¹

Again, Mr. Speakman, writing early in 1819, says:—

"Last winter I preached several times at *Bispham*; much attention was excited, and I have reason to hope some real good was done amongst them. I expect to commence preaching there again soon; and as it is a very populous village, only three miles from *Poulton*, I have no doubt, if a place can be secured for regular preaching, it will be a nursery to the cause at *Poulton*. We have already a few hearers from this place, and one from *Blackpool*, to whom the Word has been blessed."²

The Mr. Bamber mentioned above was of great Eccleston, and deacon at the Elswick Congregational Church. He has been already mentioned as betriending the Preston Congregationalists in the early history of Cannon Street, and in the early records of Fylde Congregationalism he is frequently named as a generous friend and helper. Along with him also must be associated Mr. Richard Hodgson, whose name is affectionately remembered by the villagers of Bispham. He employed himself much in preaching, and to him in a large measure the origin of the cause here is due. In the former part of this article it was stated that he had a boot and shoe establishment, built in part out of the ruins of the old Presbyterian Chapel, where now stands the Albion Hotel, and there the people used to assemble for worship. This will account for the tradition that the bricks of the present Bethel Chapel were brought from the old chapel up the lane. They were not used in the erection of Bethel Chapel, but of Mr. Hodgson's shop, where the Independents in the first instance had worship. Anterior to this they met in a barn, as the following extract shows:—

"(Bispham). The barn which was opened in the latter end of May, continues to be well attended. The people are desirous of having a prayer meeting. Some have begun to attend at Poulton on the Sabbath morning."³

¹ "Minutes of the Preston District."

² "Union Report," April, 1819, p. 9.

³ "Minutes of the Preston District" for September, 1819.

In the Union Report for April, 1821, appears the following :—

“At Bispham, notwithstanding much opposition, there is not only an increase of hearers, but the Lord is evidently giving testimony to the Word of His grace, and a few have entered into communion with the church at Poulton. Prayer and the Bible and spiritual things seem to be the great concern among the hearers.”

In October, 1824, it is said : “Preaching is continued at Bispham on Sabbath afternoons once in a fortnight ; thinly attended ; people careless.”¹ In the following September we are informed that for three months there had been no preaching at Bispham, Hardhorn, and Marton, because the minister, Mr. Metcalfe, had given all his attention to Blackpool ; but it is said that preaching would be recommenced immediately. Thus far Bispham had been connected with the Church at Poulton, but at the District Meeting held at Lancaster February, 1826, a letter from Mr. Metcalfe was read stating that “Poulton presents discouraging aspects. The friends at Marton and Bispham have left it, preferring Blackpool on account of its greater convenience.” From the minutes of the meeting held at Elswick, September, 1831, the following is extracted :—

“The delegates [from Blackpool] reported that their late pastor, Mr. Metcalfe, had resigned ; that the pulpit had been regularly supplied since his retirement ; that preaching was continued at Marton and Bispham, though not regularly ; that every Sunday evening when there was not preaching at Bispham, a prayer meeting was held there, and well attended.”

In the minutes of the meeting held at Lancaster, February, 1834, it is stated “that the friends at Bispham were erecting a small place of worship to be in connection with the interest at Blackpool.” The little chapel still exists, and at this point it may not be improper to give a description of it. From the main road leading from Blackpool to Fleetwood, which goes through the village, another road branches away to the left, which, about a hundred yards up, divides into two. One of them is the old Chapel Lane, and both lead on

¹ “ Minutes of the Preston District.”

to the cliffs by the seaside. It is at the junction of these roads that the chapel stands. A small wooden gate leads into a considerable graveyard. The chapel door is large, old-fashioned, studded with nails, and well protected by a good-sized porch. Over the doorway is the following inscription :—

BETHEL
CHAPEL,
1834.

On each side of the porch is a window with diamond-shaped panes, and in the long sides of the chapel are three each such windows. The building is made of brick, and covered with ivy, which in summer gives it a picturesque appearance ; and in the graveyard (which, however, contains no tombstones) is a goodly number of trees. Internally there is not much which is noteworthy. One aisle leads up to the pulpit, close by which is a small harmonium, which helps to enliven the musical part of the service. The chapel will seat some sixty or seventy people, and, though it has witnessed its jubilee, is not in a bad condition. It has already been stated that Bispham Chapel had to be worked along with Blackpool for some time. In the minutes of a meeting held at Preston, February, 1835, appears the following :—“At Bispham, where a small chapel has been erected, there are two services weekly—on Sabbath and Wednesday evenings.” Nothing of interest is to be found in the minutes respecting Bispham for many years. It appears as a station in connection with Blackpool in the Union Report of 1838. In 1858 some differences with the Blackpool minister led to the secession of a number of his people, who originated the Union Chapel there in Abingdon Street. It is said that the Bispham friends went with them. For some eight or ten years the chapel was closed, but recently Mr. Wayman brought about its connection again with his own church at Blackpool. He or his assistant conducts services there every other Sunday afternoon. The evening service is taken by laymen. To prevent a waste of power and to lessen expense, an arrangement has been entered into by which the Independents use the building one Sunday, and the Wesleyans another. The following brief account of Bispham is from the pen of Mr. Wayman :—

"Two years before Her Majesty ascended the throne, a little chapel at Bispham was opened. That was erected mainly for the convenience of some of the farmers living out in that direction. They found Blackpool too far away. The building is a very small one, capable of seating about 80 people. The preaching generally has been arranged by the Blackpool minister, and is still carried on. The state of affairs at Bispham is, however, not very flourishing. The old families have died off, and the younger ones have either removed or failed to attach themselves to the place."

To this may be appropriately subjoined an extract or two from the Union Reports for 1881 and 1884 :—

"[1881.] At Bispham our hold upon the village was well-nigh lost. We had comparatively little control over the chapel. The trust deeds were in the hands of a person somewhat reluctant to part with them. The chapel itself was dirty and uncomfortable, and the services had been held very irregularly, and never more than once a day. Now the services, two each Sabbath, are improving in attendance, and steps have been taken to make the place more comfortable and attractive. The alterations are likely to be proceeded with at once. The trust deeds are now in the hands of the solicitor, completing the appointment of new trustees, and when finished will be sent to the College Muniment Room."

"[1884.] At Bispham the cause is about as low as it can be. Losses have been constant during the last three years—chiefly by death, partly by removal—and no fresh people coming or children growing up to make up the deficiency. In the summer there is a little encouragement from the presence of visitors staying in or near Bispham. There seems to be nothing possible but going forward, keeping the place just alive in hope of better days. No one not intimately acquainted with the place can understand the discouragements; still our friends do not intend to beat a retreat."

The history of this little church is intimately associated with those of Poulton and Blackpool, where further information respecting it will appear.

¹ "Fylde Congregational Magazine" for July, 1887.

V.—POULTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

BEFORE proceeding with the history of Congregationalism at Poulton, a few introductory sentences about the little quaint-looking town itself may not be without interest for the reader. It has a long history—goes back at least to Saxon times, was an ancient port, and the metropolis of the Fylde. It stands upon a gentle eminence, consequently the little cluster of houses nestling around the old Parish Church can be seen from a considerable distance. It is some three miles from Blackpool, five from Fleetwood, and one from the river Wyre. Seven streets run through it, and it has a large market-place. Here may still be seen the old market cross, together with the stocks, where church offenders were condemned to spend a few hours in “durance vile;” also the whipping post, to which rogues used to be fastened and then whipped. Writing in 1837, Thornber says:—

“About eighty-nine years ago the town of Poulton did not present the modern and respectable appearance which it does at present. Few houses could boast of a slated roof, the Market Place being surrounded with low thatched buildings, if we except one, the residence of the Walmsleys. This was an antique mansion, having small lancet lights, and constructed with gables; a pond spread its waters in front, and was afterwards converted, through neglect, into a reservoir for swill. At the top of the market-place stood the Town Hall, with shambles attached; to the front of it, and at the ends, were pent-houses, and similar ones ran along each row of the houses enclosing the area. The streets were unpaved, the inhabitants holding connection with each other’s dwellings by stepping stones.”¹

Its “modern appearance” is not the thing which will particularly strike the visitor to-day. Fifty years have made it look somewhat hoary and ancient. The view of “Atticus” will be accepted as the more correct:—“There is an air of quiet gentility,” says he, “and serene independence about the place. The majority of the houses are clean and old-fashioned in appearance. Some of them have an

¹ “History of Blackpool,” p. 292.

anciently aristocratic look.”¹ Congregationalism in Poulton is not very old, though the figures in the Lancashire Congregational Calendar are very misleading. It states that the church was formed in 1876 and the building erected in 1808. What truth there is in this will appear from what follows. It has already been noted that “Poulton” was visited by Oliver Heywood, and also by the Rev. Hy. Newcome, M.A., of Manchester, who “left many good books for poor families.” The Rev. George Burder, Congregational minister at High Street, Lancaster, gives an interesting account about preaching at Poulton June 18th, 1778 :—

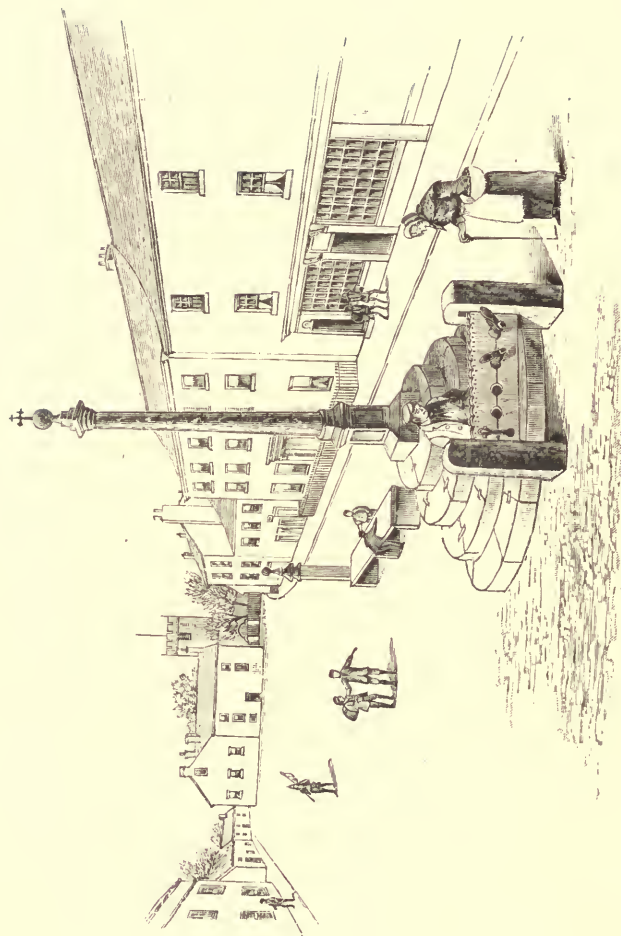
“On Friday evening,” says he, “the 18th of June, I preached at the Stocks, on the Green at Poulton, near Lancaster, where rather an odd circumstance happened. The people of the village kept aloof, none choosing to come forth from their houses to the Stocks ; and I seemed likely to have no congregation but the two or three friends who accompanied me from Lancaster. The minister of the parish, however, who was going, with a large hammer in his hand, to mend a gate, stopped and talked with me on the impropriety of appearing there to preach. I pleaded the example of the Apostles and Reformers. He said the times are now much altered. I allowed they were, but I feared for the worse, and asked if there were no swearers, drunkards, and other miserable persons in his parish ; he said there were. ‘Then, sir,’ said I, ‘it is for the sake of such sinners I came here.’ This conversation drew together a number of people. The parson departed to mend his gate, and I mounted the chair, hoping to mend the people.”²

The story of William Bramwell and other apostles of Methodism who itinerated through the whole of the Fylde country towards the end of last century, has been well told by Mr. John Taylor. One of them, Moses Holden, makes the following statement :—

“From the time of the conference of 1810, the Rev. Thomas Jackson, superintendent of the Preston circuit, never let me rest till I consented to go and try to open the Fylde country. Poulton was the only place where Methodism had made any way, and here there

¹ “Our Country Churches and Chapels,” p. 388.

² “Memoirs of the Rev. G. Burder,” p. 59.



THE STOCKS, POULTON-LE-FYLDE.

were ten members. These were given me to begin with, and I went down from Preston on the 19th of January, 1811. I got to Poulton about seven o'clock in the evening, and was kindly received. Next day I preached at Thornton Marsh, morning and afternoon, and at Poulton in the evening. I had good times, and a large number to hear me. On the 21st of January I preached at Little Marton; and then in every little town and village through the Fylde I preached, and formed classes."¹

Another passage from the lips of Moses Holden is too interesting to be omitted. It tells about his experiences at Bispham, and throws a lurid light upon the moral and religious condition of this part of the county at that time :—

"At Bispham I was persecuted by the clergyman. One day when I had to preach there some of the people begged I would not go, for Mr. Elston said he would have me put in prison. I said that would be an honour. I went and preached without any disturbance. Another Sunday Mr. Morrow, the Calvinist minister at Poulton, sent word that I had better not go to Bispham, for he was well assured that the clergyman had engaged several men to kill me, and they were to have ale and rum mixed to fit them for their work. Many came to me to persuade me not to go, but I said, 'I will go. I shall not be the first by many to suffer for the sake of Christ.' Two or three stout men refused to go with me, for the clergyman had threatened to law every one who had either lent me a chair or allowed me to stand on their horse block. So John Tomlinson took me in his shandry, and I had it for a pulpit."²

Prior to this, however, the Congregationalists had commenced work at Poulton, and the "Calvinist minister," named by Moses Holden, was the Congregational minister there. In the first Report of the Lancashire Congregational Union, bearing date January, 1808, there is a lengthy but most interesting account of the religious condition of the Fylde, in which the name of Poulton appears. The passage is worth inserting, and reads thus :—

¹ "The Apostles of Fylde Methodism," p. 51.

² *Ibid.*, p. 52.

THE FILDE.

In a moral view, this may be declared to have been the most dark and miserable part of the county. Long ago did its wretchedness excite the sympathy of certain Christians, who knew it's situation ; and a few attempts from time to time were made to diffuse throughout it the light of the Gospel. But a very large proportion of the inhabitants being Catholics, it will be easily conceived that peculiar difficulties attended every exertion to spread the truth ; and, till of late, little more could be done than to pity and to pray for this region of darkness. At *Elswick*, indeed, the lamp of sacred truth has burnt purely and steadily for several years ; but it is not surprising that it could not penetrate far in a tract so extensive as this, and so awfully obscured with the mists of Popish ignorance, error, and superstition. Nevertheless, we may, in a measure, attribute (under God) the present faintly dawning gleams of light and liberty breaking forth here, to the desires, prayers, and endeavours of the friends at *Elswick* ; as well as to the efforts of *Mr. Walker*, of *Preston*, who has well-deserved and received our public thanks for his disinterested labours of love ; for the pains which he has taken to procure and to communicate accurate information of this part of the county ; and for his own personal exertions in preaching at several of the places which are now occupied ; and thus preparing the way for the readier introduction of our friend, *Mr. Morrow*. *Mr. Morrow* has now regularly preached at nine or ten different places in the *Filde* for the space of about nine months. At some of these places his hearers amount near to a hundred in number ; at others, to many more. Through the fear of man, and the enmity of the human heart against God, which have plainly appeared in some of his neighbours ; as yet, he has not been able to get a place suitable to preach in at *Poulton* ; he, therefore, speaks in his own house, which is but very small. This prevents many persons from hearing, who otherwise would attend upon the word. But we indulge the hope, that his firm and gentle manners will, in time, so far remove prejudice as to dispose some one or other to offer a more spacious room.¹

The Rev. James Morrow, whose name appears in the extract just given, was trained by the Rev. W. Roby, of Manchester. On the completion of his college course in 1807, he was appointed by the County Union to itinerate throughout the Fylde. It is interesting to note that in these early times, so far as the Preston District of the Lancashire Congregational Union is concerned, efforts were made to adopt the rule which obtains amongst the Methodist bodies in the payment of their itinerant preachers. At a meeting of the District, held at Preston, Fishergate Chapel, on Wednesday and Thursday, March 7th and 8th, 1821, the following was agreed unto :—

¹ Pp. 6, 7.

"After serious discussion it was unanimously resolved that it be earnestly recommended to the union, in making provision for the support of the itinerants, to adopt the principal of allowing a certain sum to the unmarried, an increased amount to those who are married, and a further additional sum for each child. And that the secretary present a memorial to the annual meeting on this subject."¹

How this memorial fared is uncertain ; but probably it was not successful, as nothing more is heard of it. Mr. Morrow's principal stations were Kirkham and Poulton, the latter being his place of residence. Subjoined is another interesting passage :—

"Our former report excited the pleasing expectation of future and increasing success, and we are this year enabled to rejoice in the accomplishment of our wishes. The labours of our respected brother *Mr. Morrow* have been continued amidst occasional indispositions, and rewarded by peculiar and encouraging indications of the blessing of God. At *Poulton*, the place of his residence, a small chapel has been erected ; towards defraying the expences about £200 have been collected from various quarters ; a debt still remaining of about £250. We cannot help stating, to the honor of the friends at *Elswick* and in the neighbourhood of *Poulton*, that one-half of the subscriptions already received has arisen from their liberality."²

The chapel was opened in 1809, and the following is an account of the opening services :—

"April 11 [1809]. A small commodious Independent Chapel was opened at Poulton, near Blackpool, Lancashire. Mr. Charrier, of Liverpool, preached in the morning from Isa. lx., 1 ; Mr. Fletcher, of Blackburn, in the afternoon, from 1 Pet. ii., 12 ; and Mr. Edwards, of Elswick, in the evening, from Neh. iv., 6. There were very crowded audiences, and there is good reason to hope that the labours of Mr. Morrow, the stated minister in this town and in the neighbourhood, where he is employed as an itinerant, will not be in vain."³

¹ "Minutes of the Preston District."

² "County Union Report," January, 1809, p. 7.

³ "Evangelical Magazine" for 1809, p. 349.

Writing in the beginning of 1812, Mr. Morrow says that about twenty-one families "professedly attend Poulton Chapel," amongst whom were "many serious characters." "Though our number is small," he continues, "yet I must say that the people in general are as loving and affectionate as any minister could preach to; and whenever we have had occasion to try their liberality by making a collection they have always, without pressing, done more than I could have expected."¹ Mr. Morrow removed from Poulton to Kirkham in May, 1812, and his doing so told unfavourably upon the cause at Poulton. His subsequent career is given in the account of the Kirkham Congregational Church. After Mr. Morrow's departure from Poulton the interest declined very considerably, and its name disappears from the Reports until 1816, when we meet with the following:—

THE FILDE.

"This district is at present in peculiar circumstances. At the last half-yearly meeting in Preston, the friends at Poulton, desirous of reviving the interest there, engaged the temporary services of Mr. *Hampshire*. At the same time Mr. *Capper* signified his intention of leaving *Kirkham*. Both have completed the term of their engagement, and you are now called upon to make suitable provision for this extensive circuit. From the reports received it appears that the stated congregations in both *Kirkham* and *Poulton* are small, but that in the neighbourhood of both there is a promising aspect; many having been of late inclined to hear the Word in the adjoining villages. The ministers in this district think that the *Filde* country is still deserving of your patient culture, and hope that, by due attention, it may yet produce an abundant harvest."²

In May, 1817, Poulton was first visited by the Rev. Joseph Speakman, who found about this Zion "little else but dust and ruins." His labours were at once attended with blessing, and on the 18th of July, 1819, a church was formed, consisting of himself and three others, and by the end of February, 1820, ten others had been received. On the 15th of June, in that year, Mr. Speakman was ordained, when the Rev. R. M. Griffiths, of Kirkham,

¹ "County Union Report," January, 1812, p. 5.

² *Ibid.*, ending April, 1816, p. 16.

"delivered the introductory discourse, and received Mr. Speakman's confession of faith;" Rev. D. Edwards, of Elswick, offered the ordination prayer; Rev. George Greatbatch, of North Meols, gave the charge to the minister from 2 Tim. ii., 1; and the Rev. W. M. Walker, of Preston, preached to the people from Deut. x., 38, "Encourage him."¹

In January, 1822, Mr. Speakman left for Tockholes, near Blackburn, where he laboured until May 9th, 1830, when he removed to Garden Street Congregational Church, Sheffield. He withdrew from the ministry some time before his death, which took place on May 17th, 1856, at the age of seventy-five years. He was interred in the Sheffield Cemetery.² Mr. Speakman introduced the Gospel into Blackpool, and for a time it and Bispham were worked conjointly with Poulton. After his removal to Tockholes there was an interregnum of several months. The Rev. John Penkethman, at Tockholes from 1840 to 1848, it was thought might settle here, but the following passage tells of the disappointment of the people in this matter :—

"Poulton is much in the same condition in which it was at the last meeting. As yet there is no stated minister. The place has been regularly supplied. The hope of Mr. Penkethman's settlement here has been disappointed. Having remained one quarter, he left."³

Over the united churches of Blackpool and Poulton the Rev. John Metcalfe was called to preside towards the end of 1823 or the beginning of 1824. The Report for 1825 is not encouraging :—

"Poulton.—Congregations here are worse. No Sunday school, no prospect of recommencing it. About 13 members in the church. One added last half-year."⁴

In 1826 the chapel was closed, as the following extract shows :—

"Poulton has been altogether given up. About two months

¹ "Evangelical Magazine" for 1820, p. 336.

² "History of Tockholes Chapel," pp. 120-122.

³ "Minutes of the Preston District," September, 1823.

⁴ *Ibid.*, September, 1825.

ago, before that important step was taken, the congregation had fallen off to ten persons.”¹

The decline at Poulton was due in part to the opening of the new chapel at Blackpool in 1825. The people from Marton and Bisham who had formerly worshipped at Poulton preferring to go to Blackpool.

Mr. Metcalfe removed from Poulton to Blackpool, and on Wednesday, the 15th of October, 1828, he was ordained pastor of Bethesda Church there. The ministers who assisted in the ordination service were the Revs. John Anyon, of Inglewhite; W. Morgan; R. M. Griffiths, of Kirkham; and D. Edwards, of Elswick. His subsequent history will be more appropriate in connection with the account of Congregationalism at Blackpool. At the District Meeting, held at Garstang October 5th, 1830, it was stated that the “chapel windows are out, the spouts rotted, and the pew doors are off. People not disposed to hear, and without preaching never will.”² The minutes of September, 1831, show that the matter was being attended to; that what was called the Over Wyre or Stalmine Itinerancy had been formed, which consisted of Rawcliffe, Hambleton, Preesall, Stalmine, and Poulton. The best history of the church for the next few years is given by the minutes of the Preston District, from which the following extracts are taken:—

“[Sept., 1831.] Poulton Chapel.—Reported that it had been repaired and rendered fit for worship at an expense of about £16, but that neither spouts nor railing had yet been put up. Reported also, that the deputation had as directed waited upon Mr. Heron, who said no effort would be made by the trustees to liquidate the remaining debt upon Poulton Chapel, as they did not consider themselves responsible; but that application might be made to them as individuals, if the cause should be revived, and the people in the neighbourhood seem to take an interest in the preaching of the Gospel.

¹ “Minutes of the Preston District,” February, 1827.

² *Ibid.*, October, 1830.

"[Feby., 1832].—The attendance at Poulton Chapel on week evenings was better than expected, and upon the whole the people are willing to hear, and prejudice is wonderfully subsiding.

"[August, 1832].—The prospects are discouraging with regard to Poulton Chapel.

"[Feby., 1833].—A trial has been made of Poulton Chapel on week evenings, but without success."

From 1833 to 1838 the chapel appears to have been closed. At the District Meeting held in February of the latter year it was resolved to ask the general meeting for a grant of £25 for Blackpool on condition that once a month or oftener, if practicable, the minister preach at Poulton.

Accordingly, the chapel was once more opened in June, 1838, by a missionary meeting. The Blackpool minister at the time was the Rev. J. H. Pearson, who engaged to visit Poulton twice a month on the Sabbath, "provided the pulpit could be regularly supplied on the other Sabbaths." The "Prince of the Power of the Air," as well as the "children of disobedience," waged war against this little church in its early years, as the following passage shows:—

"Poulton Chapel has sustained so much damage from the hurricane in January that since then the windows have been fastened up, nor can the Builder applied to engage to repair the roof, &c., till the first week in March. During the interval Mr. Pearson intended to preach in a private house at Poulton, but he has been prevented by severe indisposition."

In February, 1840, Poulton Chapel was said to be comfortable, and Mr. Pearson had preached in it some twelve times since the last September. In this year he left Blackpool, and Poulton was again given up as a preaching station.

In the minutes of the February meeting of 1842 is the following:

"Poulton Chapel.—Report of sub-committee appointed at the last district meeting read—stating that they had personally inspected the chapel at Poulton, and found that with some slight repairs it might at once be occupied; that they thought there was

¹ "Minutes of the Preston District," February, 1839.

an open door for an evangelist in Poulton, if a suitable agent could be obtained and supported ; but they deemed it inexpedient to recommence the preaching at Poulton Chapel without a fair prospect of being able to maintain regular and permanent service."

Nothing was done until the autumn of 1849, when the chapel, which "had been closed so many years, having undergone complete repair," was re-opened, the expenses being nearly all defrayed. A "much-wanted" vestry was erected in 1850, and in 1851 the following report is given :—

"The attendance on the preaching in the chapel though not much increased is more regular. The condition of the Sunday school, both as it respects teachers and scholars, is gratifying. Some pious individuals have come forward to assist in teaching and in carrying on the weekly prayer meeting. Since the last anniversary of the re-opening of the chapel a vestry has been built, and £30 collected towards it."

It was agreed to ask the Union to grant £15 for Blackpool and Poulton. The next Report states that the Christian brethren of Poulton expressed a wish to be "still continued as members of the church of Blackpool." For several years after this Poulton appears in the Congregational Year Book, as supplied by "various." In 1857 the Rev. J. Noall, of Blackpool, appealed to the District Meeting for a grant of £10 for Poulton, stating that there was a chapel which cost originally £800, and a congregation of twenty adults and twelve scholars. At this time and for a few years after, Poulton had a connection more or less close with the church at Blackpool. In 1867 The Fylde became an Evangelistic station, respecting which we have the following :—

"The report from this station was read. Mr. Rose, the evangelist, has been labouring here since the 16th of August last, and it is reported that he spends 24 hours per week visiting, that 30 visits per week are paid, that he has 3 services in preaching rooms weekly, 3 cottage meetings weekly, and that the number of sittings in the preaching rooms is 300. Tracts are regularly distributed, and

1 "Minutes of the Preston District," February, 1851.

the number of hearers per week will range from 2 to 300. The Fylde district has six stations, namely, Fleetwood, Garstang, Hambleton, Bispham, Poulton, and Singleton, and these places are located in an area of 18 miles by eight. The hope was expressed that soon the chapel at Poulton would be put into thorough repair and the superintendent of the station stated that he had sanctioned the giving up of Fleetwood as a part of the Fylde Itinerary.”

These copious extracts from the minutes of the District Meetings of the Lancashire Congregational Union have been given because they are interesting in themselves, and afford the most reliable history of affairs at Poulton Chapel during these years. Up to this point that history is very chequered. There may appropriately be appended here a passage from “Atticus,” about Poulton Chapel. How far accurate it is will be seen from what has been previously stated.

“In 1836,” says he, “a blight seized it—many of the families constituting its chiet supporters left the neighbourhood, its congregation gradually decreased, and it was shut up. For 14 years no service of any kind was held in it. In 1850, through the efforts of Mr. Thomas Sherdley and Mr. John Ormond, it was re-opened; and it was curious to observe how everything in the chapel had remained unmolested during the interregnum. Generally, when buildings are forsaken for even a year or two, they run to seed dreadfully—get their windows broken, their walls marred, their fixtures spoiled or damaged; but in the case of this chapel everything was found, neither better nor worse, but exactly as it was left 14 years before. The pews, pulpit, and candlesticks were all right; and even the bits of candles were left unmolested in the sticks, just as they had been blown out on the last night in 1836, when not only the chapel, but the denomination, went into darkness. When re-opened, in 1850, the building was placed under the patronage of the Independent Church at Blackpool, and a grant of £15 was made by the county union to pay the expenses of those who came to preach. In two years the grant was withdrawn. In 1864 the lights had again to be blown out, and the chapel was closed through circumstances somewhat similar to those which shut up the place

¹ “Minutes of the Preston District,” February, 1867.

in 1836. In 1866, the building was re-opened for the second time, under the patronage of the county union; and in 1867 it was internally renovated at a cost of about £120.”¹

To this may be added the Rev. J. Wayman’s account of the matter :

“From this period,” says he, [about the year 1836], “we can trace but little of the course of Congregationalism at Poulton for some years. There is no mention of it as a station in the list of aided churches in 1840. Indeed, the chapel was closed, and remained closed some years. It is said to have been used for warehouse purposes. Probably the opening of the little meeting-house at Bispham in 1834 had had something to do with the further weakening of the cause at Poulton. About 1868, or a little earlier, the attention of the Rev. Henry Lings, then the esteemed minister at Fleetwood, was directed to the condition of matters at Poulton. Mr. Benjamin Whitworth, then of Fleetwood, a large-hearted Christian layman, made a noble offer in relation to maintaining an Evangelist in the Fylde. Mr. Lings was desirous to accept the offer, and took in hand the resuscitation of the Poulton Chapel. He was happily successful in the operation. More than £100 was raised to defray the costs of the renovation which the building underwent, and it was once more opened for public worship.”²

The Evangelist engaged was the Rev. E. Rose, but he appears to have left in 1868. He was followed by the Rev. T. R. Davies, who began his ministry here in October, 1868. He had received his training at Brecon College, and previously laboured at Marton, in Shropshire. It was not thought desirable to form a separate church at Poulton as yet, and so the good people there were in fellowship with the church at Blackpool. In the minutes of this church, under date December 3rd, 1869, is the following :—

“That, in view of the statement made by Mr. Wayman, the following friends residing in Poulton be accepted as members of this church, the Sacrament to be administered at Poulton.”

¹ “Our Country Churches and Chapels,” p. 408.

² “Fylde Congregational Magazine” for December, 1886.

This connection with the Blackpool church was kept up several years. Mr. Davies's work at Poulton was followed with rich results. During his ministry there was erected the little chapel at Hambleton in 1870, which has sitting accommodation for 124 people. Mr. Davies left Poulton in 1873 for Dalton-in-Furness, whence he removed to Kirkham. His successor was the Rev. John Shuker, who entered upon duty here in March, 1873. In 1875 the church was re-formed. The following resolution by the Blackpool Congregational Church, bearing date December 3, 1875, is copied from the minute book of that church :

"This meeting having been informed that it is the wish of certain brethren worshipping at Poulton to form themselves, in conjunction with other persons like-minded worshipping at Hambleton, into a separate church under the pastoral care of the Rev. John Shuker, does, in response to this desire, cordially dismiss them, and trusts that God's richest blessings will be given to the new church and to its esteemed pastor, the Rev. John Shuker."

Shortly after this Mr. Shuker was set apart to the work of the ministry, when the Revs. J. Clough, of Preston ; J. Wayman, of Blackpool ; J. Armitage, of Elswick ; S. Clarkson, of Lytham ; P. R. Berry, of Fleetwood ; and T. R. Davies, of Kirkham, took part in the service. Mr. Shuker removed to Tottington, near Bury, in 1880, where he still labours. In the County Union Report for 1880-81 mention is made of the formation of the Fylde Itinerancy, which included Poulton, Hambleton, Bispham, Preesall, Stalmine, Staining, Singleton, Bethesda (Blackpool), and St. Annes-on-the-Sea. The arrangement is said to have been in operation for about six months, and Mr. Shuker had as colleague the Rev. P. Webster, now at Forton. The Revs. H. Lings, Joseph Bliss, and J. T. Camm, ministers without charge, are named as giving valuable assistance, together with Mr. Wm. Brierley, employed mainly at Bethesda. About the middle of 1880 the Rev. Richard Lambert, from Wigan, was chosen as Mr. Shuker's successor. In May, 1884, Mr. Lambert removed to Blackburn Road, Bolton, where he continues to labour. In the Report for 1885 mention is made of probable alterations in the Fylde Itinerancy, and in that year it was dissolved.

Henceforth, Poulton and Hambleton appear alone and joined together. The present minister, the Rev. T. Slevan, was called to succeed Mr. Lambert in 1885. He had previously laboured at Thirsk, in Yorkshire, entering the Congregational ministry in 1871. The chapel, whose history has just been given, stands on the outskirts of the old town. The road from Blackpool runs through the town, passes into a narrow gloomy-looking street called Tithebarn Street, a little beyond which to the left hand is the chapel. It is very different to-day from what it was when erected eighty years ago. Its front faces the road. It contains one doorway, and a long handsome window on each side. Above the door on a narrow stone ledge is the date 1808, and above it in large letters the following :—

CONGREGATIONAL

RESTORED 1886.

CHAPEL,

A graveyard of moderate size stands in front of it, which contains a considerable number of upright tombstones. Originally it was a white-washed building, and had the old-fashioned round-headed windows; now it presents a clean, neat, modern appearance. Internally there have been not less important changes. In 1886 it was re-roofed, and in 1887 re-seated with pitchpine seats, the cost of the whole being about £195. On the right of the pulpit, which is quite handsome, there is a door leading into a long, narrow room, which serves as minister's vestry and Sunday school. Altogether it is now one of those comfortable little country chapels of which the denomination need not be ashamed. Writing in 1872, "Atticus" says, "If a change does not take place the chapel will, by-and-by, have to be closed again."¹ A change has taken place, and for the better. Mr. Wayman says: "The cause at Poulton is probably stronger now than it has ever been before. The congregation has within its ranks several men of real excellence in all that constitutes Christian character."² The chapel will seat about 200 people.

¹ "Our Country Churches and Chapels," p. 409.

² "Fylde Congregational Magazine" for December, 1886.

VI.—BLACKPOOL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

FEW Lancashire towns have grown more rapidly than Blackpool. The fame of this beautiful watering-place—"the Brighton of the North"—has spread not only throughout Lancashire but even the British isles, and in lands quite remote there are many to whom its name and health-giving breezes are not unknown. Yet little more than a century ago it was not deemed worthy of a place on the county maps. In Aiken's map of 1794 it is simply marked a "bathing place," whilst the little village of Bispham stands out very prominently. True its name is considerably older than this. Thornber states that in the Bispham parish registers, which begin in 1599, "there are entries of the Cowbans and Bambers 'de Poole,' which continue gradually to increase, till the marriages, baptisms, and burials of the Tomlinsons, Salthouses, Swarbricks, and Warbricks, 'of the Blackpul,' or 'of the Blackpoole,' begin to be pretty frequent." A little below the South Pier may still be seen a low and somewhat antique-looking structure, known as Vauxhall, or Foxhall Hotel. It belonged originally to the Tyldesley family, which in the days of the struggle between the House of Stuart and the people of this country generally sided with the King. Sir Thomas Tyldesley was slain in the fight in Wigan Lane, August 25, 1651, and at the spot where he fell there still remains a monument erected to his name and fame. His grandson, Thomas Tyldesley, was the occupant of Fox Hall in the year 1715, and, respecting its appearance at this time, Thornber remarks:—

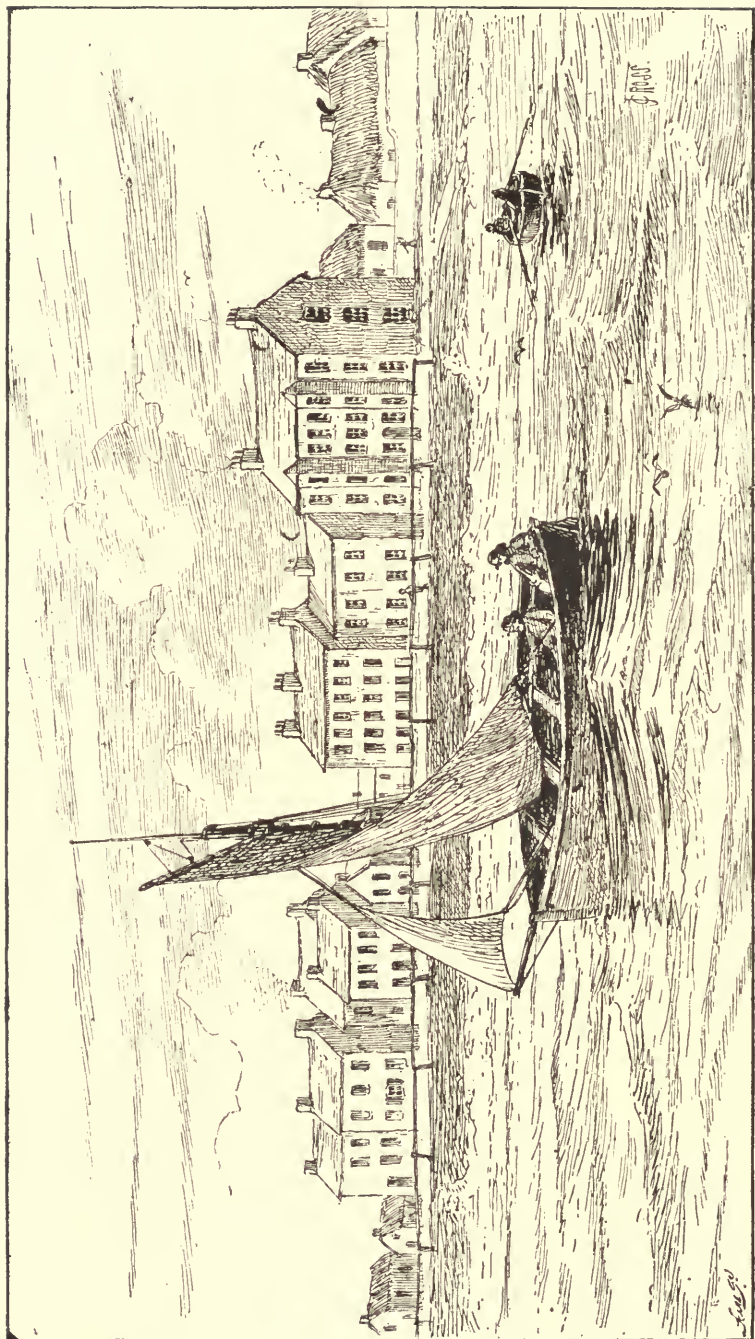
"This hunting seat of the Tildesleys would, however, have the appearance of a palace amongst the surrounding huts, which, scattered upon the site where the lower part of our village at present stands, and composed chiefly of wattles and clay, together with about a dozen houses of superior make and pretension, built on crooks, comprised the whole hamlet."²

Dr. W. Hutton, writing in 1788, says:—

"There could not be another building in Blackpool during the year 1715 that would bear the name of a house. This royal

¹ "History of Blackpool," p. 73.

² *Ibid.*, p. 73.



BLACKPOOL SIXTY YEARS AGO.

dormitory [Fox Hall], therefore, must have stood the 'little hall amongst the huts of fishermen.' Nor were the huts numerous, for many are modern."¹

Thornber says it was about the year 1745 when "Blackpool first began to attract the general notice of the public as a summer resort for sea bathing." In 1778 the number of people there is said to be about 400, and in 1831 "at the flux of the season," there were "from eight hundred to a thousand visitors." Fifty years have made a great difference in the little town, for it is said that on a single day not long ago twenty thousand people visited Blackpool. Instead of the few huts, made of "wattles and clay," will be found street upon street of beautiful palatial residences, and where the old pool stood, whose waters, of a "dark black colour," formed by the drainage from "an extensive tract of peaty land," gave this place its name, is growing up a considerable population. The population of Blackpool is estimated at about 18,000. The Episcopalians were the first to erect a building for religious purposes in Blackpool, being on the site of the present St. John's Church. A chapel was erected by them, and consecrated in 1821 as a perpetual curacy under Bispham. Twelve months before this, however, the Independents had been at work. In the articles on Poulton and Bispham it was shown how Congregationalism was introduced into Blackpool about the year 1820 by the Rev. Joseph Speakman, then stationed at Poulton, who, in the summer of that year is said to have made "a very pleasing entrance into Blackpool."² In the County Union Report for 1821, Blackpool is referred to in the following terms:—

"We are happy to report that since last spring [1820], Mr S. has constantly preached at Blackpool; and though no little influence has been employed to hinder the good work, there is the greatest encouragement to go on. There is preaching every Sabbath evening, and sometimes more come than can gain admittance."

The Rev. James Wayman says that Mr. Speakman's "first efforts

¹ Whittle's "Marina" (Blackpool), p. 26.

² "Minutes of the Preston District," October, 1820.

were made in Nickson's barn, that stood at what is now the corner of Market Street and Lane Ends Street, then at the barn, belonging to the Yorkshire House, a well-known hostelry placed on the site between the South Pier and Foxhall. There were times when the services were held in private houses."¹ Soon after this, in the year 1822, Mr. Speakman removed to Tockholes. His subsequent career has already been given in the article on Poulton. In the September minutes of the District Meeting for 1823, when there was no settled minister, appears the following statement :—

"At Blackpool, preaching has been better attended, and the regular collections more productive than ever they were before. The parish minister has manifested a strong inclination to stop preaching here, but there is at present every prospect of all his endeavours proving abortive."

In March, 1824, it is said that "a stated minister has at last been obtained" for Poulton and Blackpool; and that at the latter place "the congregation has increased from eight to fifty."² This "stated minister" was the Rev. J. Metcalfe. The minutes for Oct., 1824, say that "Blackpool has laboured under great discouragements from the influence of persecution. At present, worship is conducted in Thurston Simpson's kitchen. Ground is, however, purchased, and measures are being taken to erect a new chapel." From all this it will be gathered that, however "pleasing" the "entrance" into Blackpool, Congregationalism had much to do and suffer before it obtained a foothold. "The introduction of Nonconformity into Blackpool," says Mr. Wayman, "was not without difficulty. Nonconformists were a proscribed body. They were looked down upon with ill disguised contempt and hatred by the members of the Church as by law established. It was deemed in those days a great impertinence for men and women to think for themselves. Dissent was a sin of the first rank. Drunkenness, scepticism, profanity, anything, in fact, could be forgiven before opposition to the State religion. . . . In later times we have been made to see and know how rancorous a dominant Churchism can be. But

¹ "Fylde Congregational Magazine," May, 1887.

² "Minutes of the Preston District," March, 1824.

seventy years ago it was far more savage than it can possibly be now. Its teeth have been extracted, its claws have been cut, and its fangs have been drawn. Old Nonconformists look back with a shudder on the storm of hatred, malice, and unceasing intolerance through which they had to pass in their youth. They knew how intense was the opposition to preaching of every kind that was carried on by communities which had no connection with the Establishment. That opposition took all sorts of forms, exercising special activity to prevent the sale of land on which to build a chapel. It was from the manifestation of such activity that the Congregationalists of Blackpool were driven into an out of the way place, in the then Bonny's Lane."¹ Bethesda Chapel, the chapel referred to in the foregoing extract, was erected in 1825. The foundation stone was laid on the 21st of March, by the Rev. D. T. Carnson, of Preston, and on the 6th of July following it was opened, the preachers being the Revs. Dr. Raffles and P. S. Charrier, of Liverpool. The Elswick singers, whose fame in those days was spread the Fylde over, were present at the opening services. It is said that Dr. Raffles, who had been so delighted with their performance, after having pronounced the benediction, asked them to sing for him the following lines:—

Here in Thy courts I leave my vow,
And Thy rich grace record;
Witness, ye saints, who hear me now,
If I forsake the Lord.

The condition of this little society in 1828 is thus set forth:—

“Reported by letter that the attendance at this place varied from 30 to 70, that the number of praying people is on the increase, that in the Sunday school the number of scholars is 40, of teachers 7.”²

In 1828 Mr. Metcalfe removed his place of residence from Poulton to Blackpool, and was ordained on the 15th of October in that year. Things were evidently going wrong in 1829, as the following shows:—

¹ “Fylde Congregational Magazine,” May, 1887.

² “Minutes of the Preston District,” February, 1828.

"Blackpool. A letter from the church was read thanking the union for its liberal support. On being requested, Mr. Metcalf, the pastor, stated that the church wished to be independent of the union. That the congregation was increasing—the church in peace, Sunday scholars 50, teachers 10, and upon the whole prosperity greater than at any former period. Last year's vote not demanded. There was no application for a grant, either verbally or by letter. From a desire for the welfare of the place it was resolved, with only two dissentients—I. That this meeting regrets that there is no delegate present from Blackpool, but from the peculiar circumstances of the case this meeting suggests that a delegate be present at the annual meeting of the General Committee to be held in Manchester, and on that condition recommends the general meeting to grant the sum of £10 to aid the church at Blackpool. II. That the secretary be requested to communicate to the church at Blackpool a copy of the above resolution."

In May, 1831 Mr. Metcalfe resigned. "He had been taken in hand quietly," says Mr. Wayman, "by Mr. Thornber, the then Vicar of Blackpool, and by the gentleman who was at that time the Vicar of Marton. They persuaded Mr. Metcalfe that it would be to his advantage to quit Nonconformity, and they expressed their willingness to help him do so. They became his instructors in certain subjects which it was necessary for a clergyman to have some acquaintance with. In the end Mr. Metcalfe renounced Nonconformity, and became a curate in the Episcopal Church. What became of him afterwards is not known to the writer. It is enough for his purpose to note the fact that the first pastor of Bethesda, Blackpool, finished a short ministry by passing over into another communion."² His successor was the Rev. John Cummins, who entered upon duty here on the first Sunday in January, 1832. He was born in Manchester, April 11th, 1804, and connected with the Roby Street Chapel and School. He was recommended to the London Missionary Society as an artisan missionary for Madagascar, whither he proceeded on May 5th, 1828. The accession to the throne of the cruel, persecuting queen, Ranavalona, led to his return after a very short time. "He left with his wife and children—all

¹ "Minutes of the Preston District," March, 1829.

² "Fylde Congregational Magazine," June, 1887.

ill with fever—embarked at the Mauritius, and after four months' voyage, reached home in shattered health, having lost one child aboard ship."¹ He studied afterwards for a little time under the Rev. John Ely, of Rochdale, and settled first at Smallbridge, then at Blackpool, as already stated. At this place he was ordained on the 29th of August, 1832; an account of which service is here inserted:—

"On the 29th of August the Rev. J. Cummins was ordained to the pastoral office at Blackpool. The Rev. E. Edwards, of Garstang, opened the service; the Rev. J. Hague, of Darwen, delivered the introductory discourse; the Rev. R. M. Griffiths, of Kirkham, presented the ordination prayer; the Rev. R. Slate, of Preston, gave the charge; the Rev. D. T. Carnson, of Preston, addressed the church, and closed the service with prayer."²

Mr. Cummins appears to have been much occupied, and his labours were not without success, though the difficulties were many and serious. In a letter dated February, 1833 he stated "that he preached at Blackpool, Bispham, Haws-side, Layton Laws, Little Layton, Moss-side, Great Marton, and Great Marton Moss-side; that the congregations at Blackpool averaged from 100 to 220 in summer and from 50 to 70 in winter; that the number of church members was 18, who were working together in love, and that during the year there had been two added, and two had withdrawn; that the Sabbath school was better attended than formerly, there being from 70 to 80 children in summer and from 50 to 60 in winter, with eight teachers; that there was preaching six times a week, with three prayer meetings; that the attendance at each of the out-stations was good; and that, notwithstanding the opposition of the incumbent of Blackpool, the curate of Marton, and Mr. Metcalfe, there was cause to go on in the good work, taking courage."³ The minutes of the next year state "that the attendance of visitors at Blackpool had been such during the summer as to induce the Friends to think of erecting a gallery or otherwise

¹ "Congregational Year Book," for 1873, p. 321.

² "Evangelical Magazine" for 1832, p. 579.

³ "Minutes of the Preston District," February, 1833.

enlarging the chapel, for which purpose liberal subscriptions had been offered, but the Wesleyans having commenced preaching in the village and being about to erect a chapel, they deemed it prudent not to make any alterations at present; that the number of Sabbath scholars had been diminished by the unfair means employed to induce them to attend the schools of the Church establishment."

Mr. Cummins's letter to the District Meeting for February, 1835, reports much the same as last respecting the attendance at service, and states "that prejudice and opposition kept the Sabbath school in a low state, there being only 30 children, with four teachers." Mr. Wayman notes the difficulties of Mr. Cummins's pastorate and ultimate withdrawal from the Church in the following terms:—

"Mr. Cummins's preaching did not afford unmixed satisfaction. A Mr. T. Eccles appears to have been a brother whose demands were more than Mr. Cummins was able to satisfy. Hence, in the scanty records, which were kept at that period, we note how the case of Mr. Eccles is solemnly discussed at a meeting of the church, and how the conclusion reached concerning him is, that he must be regarded as having withdrawn himself. The withdrawal of Mr. Eccles does not seem to have given the sermons of Mr. Cummins more grace and favour in the sight of the people, for in what may be regarded as the last brief abrupt entry found in that gentleman's handwriting is the following, under March 10th, 1836: 'At a special meeting held this day the state of things was gone into. The people were dissatisfied with me. Nothing done.' The end of the matter was that Mr. Cummins terminated his pastorate, and the pulpit was once more vacant."¹

He left Blackpool in April, 1836, and laboured afterwards at Holbeck, Kirkheaton, and Stubbin-Elsecar. He retired from the ministry in 1865, and resided in Sheffield. His death took place on the 23rd of January, 1872.

In the minutes for February, 1837, there is the following particularly interesting note respecting Blackpool:—

"The letter from the church stated that there had been con-

¹ "Fylde Congregational Magazine" for June, 1887.

siderable difficulty in keeping up the attendance at some of the preaching stations, and that the Sabbath School was given up in consequence of intimidation from Church people. They solicited the same grant as before—£30. The report of the sub-committee appointed to visit Blackpool stated that they had met the church there on Monday evening, October 10th, and instituted a careful examination respecting their doctrinal sentiments and Christian proceedings, and that some circumstances led them to question which of two ministers—the one preaching high Calvinistic doctrine, the other dwelling generally on faith and practice—would be more congenial with the taste of the people.”

It would be interesting to know to which class the brother belonged who was actually chosen. This was the Rev. J. H. Pearson, who settled with them some time before 1839. In that year he reports concerning Blackpool and all the out stations:—“We have reason to thank God and take courage.”¹ There was a Mr. Pearson employed as an itinerant by the Union, about Wray, Ingleton, Bentham, Blackburn, and Lowgill as early as 1818, but whether the same as the Blackpool Pearson has not been ascertained. Before September, 1840, he had left Blackpool and gone I know not whither. His successor was the Rev. Thomas Aitcheson, who began his ministry here on May 1st, 1842. He came to Blackpool from Manchester. In the minutes for February, 1846, is the following notice of Mr. Aitcheson’s removal:—

“A letter from the church at Blackpool stated that the unpleasant circumstances connected with the removal of Mr. Aitcheson, soon after the annual meeting of the union, has had an injurious effect on the inhabitants of the place. During the bathing season the chapel was well attended, but since the congregations had been small, owing partly to the cause mentioned above, and partly to the wetness of the season.”²

“The ministry of Mr. Aitcheson,” says Mr. Wayman, “comes to a sudden, or an apparently sudden termination towards the end of 1845 [rather the first half of the year]. From traditions that still

¹ “Minutes of the Preston District,” February, 1839.

² *Ibid.*, February, 1846.

linger, it would seem that the temptations of Blackpool life proved too strong for him; that the Church of Bethesda was compelled to be rid of him at any cost, and that he drifted out into the 'night,' but where he drifted those who now remain of the congregation of that day are entirely ignorant."¹

In 1849 a new edifice—the one in Victoria Street—was erected for the Congregationalists of Blackpool. The Congregational Year Book for 1850 says that it was at Blackpool "the great Bible movement broke out in 1845, which led to the determination to promote the erection of the present chapel." The foundation stone of this new building was laid on Thursday, March 22nd, 1849, by Thomas Eccles, Esq., of Lower Darwen, "assisted by the Rev. Dr. Halley and others, when a considerable number of people congregated."² It was opened for public worship on the 13th of September following, and is described as affording accommodation for 600 adults and 100 children. The architect was Edward Walters, Esq., of Manchester. "The concluding report of the committee states the total contributions (which have been collected mainly from the provinces) to amount to £3,037 4s. 7d.; and the disbursements, including the land, trust deeds, finishing and furnishing, to £3,022 5s. 2½d.; leaving a balance of £14 19s. 4¼ towards the erection of a school and minister's house, which remain to be prosecuted."³ The name of Mr. James Dilworth, of Manchester, is mentioned as one to whom the success of the undertaking was largely due. The following passage, which relates to the building, and also to some difficulties respecting the trust deeds, will be read with interest:—

Since the opening the chapel has been well attended, many of the residents having taken pews and become hearers, so that on a Lord's Day evening there has been a congregation frequently of 200 to 300 persons. The church members have increased from 20 to 34, and the Sunday scholars from 20 to nearly 50. The church had intended, on account of their prosperous circumstances, to declare themselves independent of the funds of the union; but because of some peculiarities connected with the trust deed of the new chapel, which has not yet been completed, they "deem it wise to continue under its protection." The following resolutions were then unanimously

¹ "Fylde Congregational Magazine" for June, 1887.

² "County Union Report" for April, 1849.

³ "Congregational Year Book" for 1850, p. 196.

adopted:—1. Moved by Rev. J. Fleming, seconded by Mr. J. Bryning, that, having carefully and seriously considered the case of Blackpool, and especially in connection with strong objections which the members of the Church have expressed against certain clauses proposed to be introduced into the new chapel trust deeds, this committee recommends that the sum of £15 be requested for Blackpool and Poulton, connected with it, for the ensuing year. 2. Moved by Rev. J. Fleming, seconded by Rev. J. Armitage: That the committee of the Preston District of the Lancashire Congregational Union, having heard with regret, at its annual meeting, holden at Lancaster, Feb. 15th, 1850, that it is proposed to introduce certain clauses into the trust deeds of the new Independent Chapel at Blackpool, giving to the trustees equal power with the church in the election of a pastor for the church assembling in the said chapel, and having been earnestly requested by the church at Blackpool (which unanimously and strongly objects to the introduction into the trust deeds of the said clauses) to interfere on its behalf, begs very earnestly but respectfully to record its protest against the embodiment in the said trust deeds of the said proposed clauses, as alike unscriptural in principle and opposed to the customs and policy of the Congregational Churches of this country. 3. Moved by Rev. J. Fleming, seconded by Mr. R. C. Richards: That the secretary of the District Committee be respectfully requested to write a friendly letter to the church at Blackpool, advising them to write to the trustees [of the new chapel], praying them not to insert the proposed clauses into the trust deeds, and to respectfully protest against their introduction.¹

The Rev. R. M. Griffiths, who, after his retirement from Kirkham in 1849, resided some ten years in Blackpool before his death gave valuable help to the church during its early struggles. In 1852 the Blackpool Church sent a letter to the Union, thanking it for the aid which it “has for many years afforded to the cause at Blackpool,” and declaring its determination to be henceforth independent “of the funds of the union.” The first minister of the new chapel in Victoria Street was the Rev. John Noall, B.A. He was trained at Cheshunt, and entered upon duty here some time in 1852. “That pastorate,” says Mr. Wayman, “proved a most unfortunate one, and its history is the most painful episode in all the annals of Blackpool Congregationalism.” He further vividly sets forth the condition of things at Blackpool during this time thus:—

There can be little doubt that the infusion of a Manchester element into the congregation had anything but a soothing influence upon the older

¹ “Minutes of the Preston District,” February, 1850.

representatives. There were changes in the singing, and particularly in relation to instrumental accompaniments, which were a source of perplexity. Then the minister tried to add to his limited income by taking a few pupils and working himself up scholastically, so that he could win the London University degree of B.A. He succeeded in doing that, much to the grief of some of the members of his church. They made the matter a stone of stumbling. The kind of inuendo they used against Mr. Noall took this form: "If the pastor had been as anxious to win souls as to have two letters attached to his name he would have been more successful in his ministry." Talk of that kind soon undermines a character; and in a church quickly breeds uneasiness of a pronounced type. To have won a degree seems, as we have seen, to have been a great offence. But when the minister wore his bachelor's gown in the pulpit that was an offence still greater. That was pronounced to be "flat Popery." There were some members of the church who would only attend at the time of opening the building for the purpose of showing strangers into the pews. Having performed that operation, they would leave and spend the hours set apart for worship elsewhere. Matters went on, with much friction, down to 1858. Then a new departure was taken. Several of the dissatisfied members withdrew themselves, and forthwith established a cause in a room in Talbot Road. They became the nucleus of the Union Baptist Church, which now stands in Abingdon Street.¹

The end of the matter was that Mr. Noall resigned in 1861, and the "Church which had dwindled down to about a dozen members was dissolved," though services continued to be conducted on Sabbath days. In 1863 the trustees invited the Rev. Richard Raby Redman to take charge of the place, which he did. He was born at Great Eccleston, only a few miles from Blackpool, on June 24th, 1831, and is said during the time that he was schoolmaster at Lane Heads, near his native village, to have made a weekly visit to Preston, twelve miles distant, that he might prosecute the study of the Latin and Greek languages under the guidance of Mr. James Crompton. He attended the Elswick Congregational Church, and entered Airedale College in 1855. His first settlement was at Knaresborough, where he was ordained on May 1st, 1860. Thence he removed to Blackpool in the early part of 1863, and was recognised as pastor on September 1st. The church was re-formed on August 3rd, 1864, fourteen members comprising it. Never very strong, Mr. Redman was carried away by death on the 26th of February,

¹ "Fylde Congregational Magazine" for September, 1887.

1868. From the Congregational Year Book for 1869, the following is extracted :—

“Mr. Redman was Hon. Secretary of the Blackpool Life Boat Institute. The coxswain wrote a letter of condolence to Mr. Redman’s mother, in his own name and ‘that of the crew,’ and requested the honour and privilege of carrying his remains to the grave. The request was complied with. On Wednesday morning, March 4th, he was buried in the churchyard of St. John’s, Blackpool, the poor and the widow making great lamentation at the death of a kind and generous friend. The funeral sermon was preached in Victoria Street Chapel the following Sabbath evening, from Rev. xiv., 13, to a large congregation.”

The present minister, Rev. James Wayman, was educated at the Wesleyan College, Didsbury, near Manchester, but began ministerial work amongst the Congregationalists at Newington Chapel, Liverpool, in 1865. He was “called” to the vacant pastorate at Blackpool in October, 1868, and commenced duty there on Sunday, January 4th, 1869. Considerable improvements and alterations have been made in the Victoria Street Chapel during the twenty-one years of Mr. Wayman’s ministry. Up to 1870 the Sunday school had been conducted in the chapel gallery, but in that year the adjoining school buildings were erected. The foundation stone was laid on Wednesday, April 13th, 1870, by Henry Lee, Esq., of Manchester ; and on August 30th and September 11th, the Revs. Dr. Mellor and J. G. Rogers, B.A., respectively, preached in connection with the opening services. The cost of the undertaking was about £1,350. In the spring of 1872 the interior of the chapel was beautified at a cost of £120. In 1875-6 the chapel was enlarged, an organ gallery erected, and an organ put in at a cost of about £800 ; and in 1877 the church erected a manse. The chapel is now both comfortable and commodious, though in the summer season its sitting capacity is often tried to the utmost extent. There are few ministers in Lancashire so well known and deservedly respected as Mr. Wayman. To him and his efforts the revival of Liberalism in this part of the county is largely due ; and in many questions affecting the social and material, as well as moral

and spiritual wellbeing of the town in which he labours has he deeply interested himself. The Rev. M. H. Sharp, of Kirkby Lonsdale, excepted, he is by many years the senior Congregational minister in the Preston District, and consequently is regarded as a sort of "bishop" by the younger brethren. Blackpool would not be complete without him; he has raised Congregationalism in the town, and given it a respectability and power it never had before. On the attainment of his majority a short time ago, his people presented him with a substantial token of their respect and affection; and in 1887 his brethren in the county did the same by calling him to occupy the presidential chair of the Lancashire Congregational Union. It remains only that a few further notes be added about Bethesda Chapel, which is still in existence. Fifty years ago, getting to Bethesda Chapel "in wet weather," says Mr. Wayman, "was by no means a pleasant operation. It involved a tramp through roads that were not made in the best style nor kept in the best order. As carriages were very few in number, and the elegant landau was unknown, the only available conveyance to be had on wet Sundays was a bathing machine."¹ Things have improved considerably since. Bethesda Chapel is still where it was, but the approaches to it are much more comfortable than they were in those days. A short walk of about four or five minutes from the South Pier up Chapel Street will lead directly to it. The chapel is in Kent Road, to the left going down, and faces the pedestrian in going up Chapel Street. It is well protected by a brick wall and iron railings. It used to be called the "White Chapel in the Fields," because it was whitewashed, and it has still a whitish appearance, being covered over with cement. It is also still in the fields: except in front, there are few houses round about. The district has not grown as it was thought it would when the chapel was erected. There are two long windows in front, containing small square panes, and between is the door or main entrance, over which is a stone tablet containing this inscription:—

BETHESDA
CHAPEL.
A.D. 1825.

¹ "Fylde Congregational Magazine" for June, 1887.

On one side of the edifice are two windows similar to those in front, and behind is an infant schoolroom, added recently. There is nothing of special interest to be found within. The place is now used as a day school, consequently all has been transformed. Some of the old pew backs serve as panelling for the walls. Attached to it is a considerable graveyard, in which is a goodly number of tombstones, all, however, quite modern. There is one "in loving memory of Emma Jane, wife of James Wayman, pastor of the Victoria Street Congregational Church, who fell asleep October 1st, 1877, aged 33." After the erection of the chapel in Victoria Street, services ceased to be held in Bethesda Chapel. The last church meeting held in the place was presided over by the late Rev. William Roseman, of Bury, on September 15, 1848. "The business brought before that meeting," says Mr. Wayman, "had reference to the future of the old chapel. The committee for the erection of the new building recommended that the 'property be sold.' This view of the case did not meet the wishes of the parties interested. The burying ground was the stumbling block to the disposal of the spot, which had grown dear to not a few of them. Consequently a long resolution was passed, the substance of which was—that the chapel be retained, and be used as a place in which to conduct funeral services in connection with such interments as might from time to time take place within the ground. The chapel was retained. In due course it served the Methodist Free Church as a base of operations for its campaign in Blackpool. Later on it did a like useful work for the Primitive Methodists." On Thursday, August 19th, 1875, the chapel was re-opened for religious worship, when the Rev. J. Wayman preached to a large congregation, from Rev. xxi., 22. On the Friday, the Rev. T. Pearson, Wesleyan minister, preached. The following passage will indicate the improvements made at this time :—

"The whole of the interior woodwork has been grained pitch pine, the centre seats have been cushioned, gas has been laid on, and everything has been done which could in any way add to the comfort of the worshippers. Outside, new boundary walls have

¹ "Fylde Congregational Magazine" for August, 1887.

been erected, and the section bounded by Kent Road has a stone coping, surmounted by a neat iron railing.”¹

The amount expended was about £150. Work was kept up here till 1885, when the new interest at South Shore took its place. Bethesda Chapel, as already stated, is now used for day school purposes, and in it are some 250 scholars.

VII.—THE OLD HOMESTEAD AT LITTLE MARTON, MOSS SIDE

SOME two or three miles in a south-easterly direction from Blackpool is a place called Little Marton, Moss Side. It is not exactly a hamlet or village, for there are not sufficient houses to permit of its being so designated. Less than two centuries ago there was near unto it “a great lake, or standing poole, or water, called Marton Mear.”² Originally this was six miles long, a mile and a half wide, and it was an important fishing station. It has since been drained, and is now only “a hollow between two ridges of land.” There still stands on the left of the road leading from Blackpool to Little Marton, Kirkham, and Preston, a curious seventeen century house, which goes by the name above given. It is a low thatched edifice, and until about thirty-five years ago was supplied with the old-fashioned mullioned windows. Attached to it are the shippin and barn, built of clay, and the whole block of buildings lengthwise occupies a considerable portion of ground. Internally the house is even more quaint and ancient-looking than it is without. A man of decent height would find it dangerous to walk erect. The floor, now covered with red tiles, was formerly made of clay, into which hollows of considerable depth had been worn in the course of time. The fire place has been modernised, but a huge oak beam across this part of the building hangs low, and proclaims its antiquity. Some letters have been cut into it,

¹ “Fylde Congregational Magazine” for September, 1875.

² “History of Poulton-le-Fylde” (Chetham Society, New Series, Vol. viii.), p. 25.



LITTLE MARTON, LICENSED FOR NONCONFORMIST WORSHIP IN 1763.

but they cannot be deciphered. The house has been in existence considerably over two centuries. It was erected by the Fisher family, and has been in their hands ever since, the present occupant being Mr. Nicholas Fisher. About the middle of last century a prominent figure in the religious world was the Rev. Benjamin Ingham, related by marriage to the Countess of Huntington. In true apostolic fashion he visited and preached in almost every part of Yorkshire, inspiring many others to go and do likewise. Some of his fellow labourers came into Lancashire, and amongst other places preached at Marton. At this time the only Nonconformist places of worship in the Fylde district were Elswick and Bispham ; and it is more than probable that these were in a languishing condition. For a time the Inghamite preachers had to be content with outdoor service, but eventually Mr. Robert Fisher offered to them his house—the one still standing. To protect themselves against the vicar of Poulton, who threatened to prosecute them for holding worship in his parish, Mr. Fisher got his house licensed, and tramped all the way to Preston—a distance of nearly twenty miles—for the purpose. The original license is in the possession of Councillor Henry Fisher, of Blackpool, who has kindly lent it to me, with other documents. The following is an exact copy :—

“County of Lancaster, } This is to certify that at the General
to wit. } Quarter Session of the Peace held by
adjournment at Preston, in and for
the County palatine of Lancaster, on Thursday, the Eighth Day of
October, in the Second year of King George the third’s reign, the
House of Robert Fisher, of Marton, in the parish of Poulton, in the
said county, was recorded as a meeting place for protestants dis-
senting from the church of England to Exercise their religious
worship.—In Witness my Hand,

BRADLEY,
Deputy Clerk of the
Peace in and for the
County of Lancaster.”

Shortly after this a few Christian people in the neighbourhood were formed into a church, and the Lord’s Supper was administered

to them by Mr. Ingham's preachers. An original letter from Mr. Ingham to Mr. and Mrs. Fisher is still in existence, of which the following is a copy :—

“Dear Friends, tho unknown,—I have received your kind and loving Letter, wherein you express your 'Thanks to God, and also to unworthy me, for the Benefit you have received by the preaching and Conversation of my Brethren and fellow-Labourers, who have been amongst You. All Thanks are due to God alone ; because all the good that is done upon Earth the Lord doth it himself. Whoever planteth or whoever watereth in the Gospel ministry, yet God alone giveth the increase. To Him alone is due all Glory and Blessing and Praise. Yet it is well to esteem Christ's Servants for their Master's Sake, and I am glad to hear of your Respect and Esteem to my Brethren on that account. To love any one for the Truth's Sake, or because he belongeth to Christ, is a mark of some Grace ; and to receive such on that account is a good work. See 3 Epistle of John, and 6 verse. I wish that you may know and understand the word of Truth, the Gospel of your Salvation. It is indeed good News to anyone that is sensible that he is a helpless and condemned Sinner to know, understand, and believe that the just God is well pleased in His beloved Son, the only Saviour of Sinners ; whose blood is the only Atonement for Sin, and yet cleanseth from all Sin, whose most perfect and divine Righteousness imputed maketh Blessed. See Romans, 4 chap. and verses 5, 6, 7, and 8. May the merciful God and Saviour enlighten your Understandings by His Holy Spirit. May He give you to know Him, whom truly to know is Eternal life. And if you become true Followers of Jesus Christ you may expect that the world will hate you. Yet, fear not ; that even is a Blessing. See 5 Matt., 10, 11, 12, and 10 Mark, 29 and 30.—I am your well wisher and Servant in the Lord, BENJAMIN INGHAM.—13th March, 1762.”

The Inghamite preachers do not appear to have laboured long at Marton, and after them the work was continued by ministers of the Independent denomination. Eventually those who had worshipped at this humble meeting-house joined the Elswick Congregational Church, and every Sunday they walked a distance of nine miles

over not very good roads. Worship has, however, been held in this house by the Independents at different times since.

Writing to her son John Fisher, carder, living at Holcombe High Fold, near Bury, in 1797, Mrs. Fisher says that the Lord's Supper is again administered at her house. Her letter contains many interesting items, and is here inserted, the orthography a little changed :—

“Dear Son,—I take this opportunity of sending you a few lines to let you know how we all do. Ellen has been very poorly, and is but poorly ; Harry is rather better than he was when you were here ; Robert is much like. Your brother-in-law's family is all moderate. Here hath been a very wet harvest, very few people have got many turf; we have got very few. We have got 28 baskets of coals and 10 hundred of cannel. We have bought a mare coming 6 years ould ; we are to give 10 pounds for it—it is with coult. We have killed our swine and bought 2 pigs. Oats prove mostly very light in this part. We have the Lord's Supper here again, and meetings on Sabbath days. I am in good health, the Lord be thanked, and for all His mercies we daily receive from him. Oh that we may all set our affections on things above, and less on things on earth. The Lord grant we may live by the Faith of the Son of God. We desire you to write to us as soon as you can. We want to hear from you ; we want to hear how my poor Nicholas goes on ; he is often in my thoughts. I should be very glad to hear his heart was changed for the better. Give my dear love to him, if he be near you. Your brothers and sisters give their love to you.—From your ever loving mother, *PHEBE FISHER*.—P.S.—If Nicholas be not near you, give my love to him when you write.—Marton, November 1st, 1797.”

In the earlier years of Blackpool Congregationalism its ministers were accustomed to hold services out here. The Rev. J. Cummins gives as his preaching stations in 1833 Bispham, Haws-side, Layton Laws, Little Lawton, Moss Side, Great Marton, and Great Marton, Moss Side. With the growth of Blackpool, however, services here were discontinued.

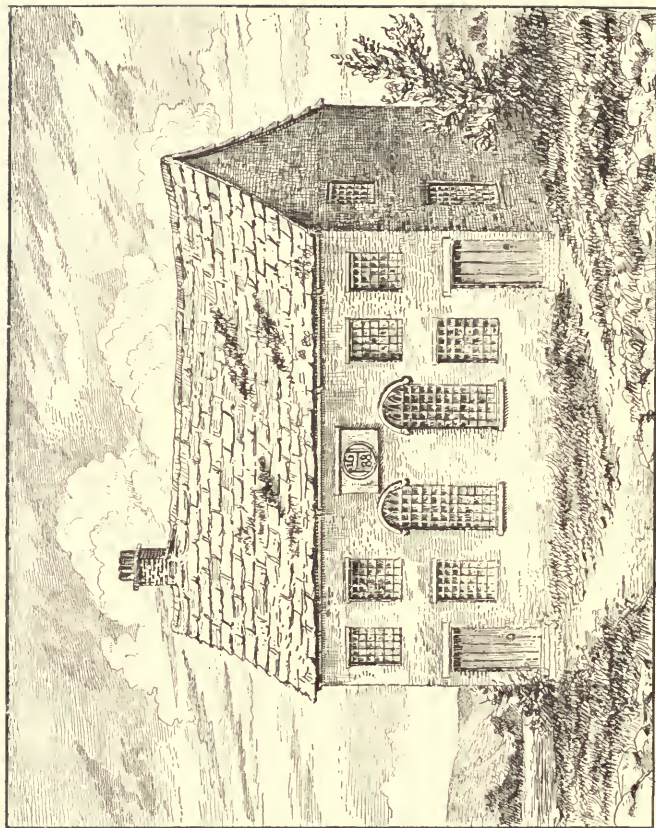
There are still preserved about the old house several interesting

relics. One of these is a long iron bar, which served as a sort of guard when the old fire-place was in existence. It was customary to place upon it a ring when a child was born. In the oaken beam already referred to is a large hook, from which used to hang the rush lights or "dips," which served as candles. Around it many young girls from the neighbourhood were accustomed to do their work, the occupant at that time learning them to spin or weave. A more interesting object still is the small preaching desk, the front part of which serves also as a chair. It is made of oak, has stood well the test of time, and from its appearance I imagine it must have been used by the first preachers who came to this neighbourhood. It was placed just under an old case clock, which literally *stands* against the wall, for it has long ceased to tell the time. The clock bears upon it the name of "Lomax," of "Poolton." Until recently, like the preaching desk, it was painted black, but now it is a dark red. There are even yet some living who tell about being christened under "the old black clock."

Robert Fisher, who licensed his house in 1763, married Phoebe Hesketh, about whose family connections a few notes may not be without interest. Her grandfather was the Rev. Robert Hesketh, minister probably at Bispham towards the end of the seventeenth century. He was at Platt Chapel, near Manchester, from 1704 to 1712, and during this time married as his second wife Mrs. Hannah Sykes. In the Northowram Register is a notice of this to the following effect:—"Mr. Robert Hesketh, Minr., at Platt Chappel, near Manchester, and Mrs. Hannah Sykes, of Leeds, mar. Apl. 6th [1708]."¹ This was the "daughter of Col. Sykes, granddaughter of Capt. Pickering, by his wife, the sister and co-heir of Ralph, eighth Lord Eure, of Wilton Castle, Durham, and Malton Castle, and Stokesley, Yorkshire. She died in 1760, and, as well as Capt. Pickering, was buried at Tingley."² Mr. Hesketh was for some time, after leaving Platt, minister at Winterburn, near Settle and Tingley. He was living in 1725, and was buried in the private burial ground of the Eure and Pickering families, leaving three sons and two daughters. One of these daughters—Bathshua—married Mr. Joseph Swaine in 1744, through whom the Heskeths

¹ P 200.

² "Christian Reformer" for 1859, p. 367.



NORTHOWRAM CHAPEL, WHERE OLIVER HEYWOOD MINISTERED.

became related to the Priestley family. One of his sons was the Rev. Robert Hesketh, educated at the University of Glasgow, whose ordination at Carnforth on October 27, 1725, is noted by Mr. Walkden in his diary. From Carnforth Mr. Hesketh removed to the neighbourhood of Bolton—probably Walmsley; thence to Eastwood, and afterwards to Northowram, the Rev. Oliver Heywood's old church. At this place he died, and was buried in the chapel yard. The following is a copy of the inscription upon the tablet erected to his memory in the chapel:—

In memory of the

REV. ROBERT HESKETH,

Late of the University of Glasgow, who was an eminent minister of the Gospel 52 years, and pastor of this church 29, whose learning and moral character entitled him to the esteem of all his acquaintance.

He departed this life on January 19th, 1774, aged 77.

Likewise of ELLEN, his beloved wife, of sacred memory, and of a character worthy the husband she enjoyed.

She died December 27th, 1759, aged 52.

It was during his residence in the neighbourhood of Bolton that his daughter Phœbe was born, December 23rd, 1726. In the twenty-fourth year of her age it is said that she came to reside with an aunt at Bispham, where she made the acquaintance of Robert Fisher. She eventually married him, and bore him six children. Her death took place on Sunday morning, April 19th, 1812, in the eighty-sixth year of her age, and the event was improved to a large congregation from the words, "An old disciple."¹ Her husband, Robert Fisher, died many years before her, and was interred in Poulton Churchyard. One of her sons—Henry (old Harry) Fisher—kept on the old homestead. He was married when about fifty-five years of age, but lived to see six children grown up. He died many years ago, at the age of eighty-seven years, and his son is the present Councillor Henry Fisher, of Blackpool. Mr. Nicholas Fisher, who resides at the old house, is a nephew of Councillor Fisher. Phœbe Fisher's sister married the Rev. Wm. Northend, who was minister at Haslingden and at Brighouse. The Rev. John Bartlett, Nonconformist minister, of Malton, in Yorkshire, was also her cousin.

¹ "Evangelical Magazine" for 1812, p. 469.

VIII.—ST. ANNES AND SOUTH SHORE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

CONGREGATIONALISM at St. Annes is of quite recent growth, having only just entered into its second decade. And there is good reason for this. The town itself is not much older. Writing in 1886, the Rev. James Wayman says:—

“It is but little more than eleven years since what was called the first stone’ of St. Annes was laid. Prior to March, 1875, the spot on which that growing town now stands was a waste of sand-hills. To-day it is quite transformed, and is eloquent with the promise of still further changes.” “The leading spirits in that work of development,” he continues, “hailed from East Lancashire, Bury and the Rossendale Valley being largely represented. The famous firm of architects, Maxwell and Tuke, were prominent, and so, too, was Mr. Wm. Porritt, from Helmshore.”¹

The religious wants of the new community were first provided for by the Established Church. Lady Clifton, whose husband was lord of the manor, at her own expense erected the handsome church, about a mile inland. In 1876, partly through the influence of the Rev. S. Clarkson, the Lytham Congregational minister, and partly through the Rev. James Wayman, of Blackpool, a room was opened for Free Church worship. This was over a stable, and on a hot, sultry day “the odours that permeated the apartment” were not of the pleasantest character. The Methodists, Baptists, and Congregationalists worshipped together, and supplies from the three denominations were regularly sent according to plan. The Wesleyans were the first to go their own way, and in the summer of 1880 some further differences led to the withdrawal of the Congregational element, and the resolve to start a new interest bearing that name. In 1880 the Fylde Itinerancy came into being, and St. Annes was included amongst the places covered by it. The Lancashire Congregational Calendar for 1881-2 says:—

“St-Annes-on-the-Sea has been added as a new station during the latter months of the year, and there are indications of the

¹ “Fylde Congregational Magazine” for 1886.

possibility of a good church and congregation being gathered there. The St. George's Assembly-room was taken in September last by Revs. R. M. Davies and J. Wayman, and arrangements made for opening it as a Congregational Church forthwith. Furniture was at once procured, the room made as comfortable as possible, and on the 9th September Mr. Wayman preached the opening sermon. The expense of fitting up the room amounted to nearly £40, the whole of which has been raised."

Amongst those who gave generous help at this time are named :— A. Haworth, Esq., Manchester ; J. Maxwell, Esq., Bury ; Mrs. Whiteside and Mr. A. Taylor, Blackpool ; and Mr. and Mrs. Porritt, Helmsore. In the spring of 1881 a church was formed consisting of some twenty members, the Revs. J. Wayman, R. Lambert, (Poulton), and J. Bliss assisting in the service. The pulpit was supplied by ministers connected with the Itinerancy, viz., the Revs. P. Webster and R. Lambert, together with Mr. Wayman and the Rev. T. Taylor, of Lytham. The two latter gentlemen conducted the week-night services for several years. A Sunday school also was commenced. To the names already given of those who have been good friends to the Congregational cause here must be added those of Mr. R. Boyle and his family. In the early part of 1884 the Baptists started a new interest in the town which somewhat weakened the Congregationalists. In the autumn of that year, however, the church had so far recovered as to be able to invite the Rev. A. Somerville, late of Chorley, to be their pastor. He entered upon his labours here at the beginning of the following year, and with his settlement the church ceased to belong to the Fylde Itinerancy. It also became independent of financial aid from the Union. In 1886 Mr. Somerville resigned, and in January, 1888, the present minister—the Rev. W. C. Lee—who was educated at Lancashire College, took charge of the church. The building in which services are held was opened for worship on Sunday, September 5th, 1886. The Revs. J. Wayman, of Blackpool, and W. A. Blake, then at Stockport, were the preachers, and the collection amounted to about £33. It was built by Mr. Porritt at his own expense, and is thus described :—

"The hall is a model of what such an edifice should be. It is

elegant in design, and it is admirably adapted for a place of assembly. It is well lighted, well warmed, and well ventilated. Its acoustic properties seem perfect. The platform is sufficiently capacious to contain the organ, the choir, and the minister. Chairs are used in lieu of benches. The building has attached to it two commodious vestries and a boiler-house, fitted up with all requisities for tea parties. There is sitting accommodation for at least 300 persons.”¹

Mr. Porritt charges a nominal rent for the use of the room, which he generously gives as a contribution to the building fund of the new chapel, a site for which in one of the best parts of the town has been set aside by Mr. Porritt. The church has had many difficulties to face thus early in its history, but it is satisfactory to know that steady progress is being made and much useful work done.

To this sketch of St. Annes Congregationalism may appropriately be appended a few sentences respecting the still newer interest at South Shore close by. Until four or five years ago, Blackpool had only one Congregational Church—that represented by Victoria Street. An attempt was made to resuscitate the interest at Bethesda Chapel, but after a short time it was found better to adopt a more courageous policy. As in the case of St. Annes, the new venture at South Shore is due to the energy of Mr. Wayman. At first several attempts were made to procure a preaching room in this district, to no purpose; but in June, 1885, it became known “that the most centrally located plot in South Shore could be purchased on remarkably easy terms.”² This was in Alexandra Road, only a few yards from the beach. The Victoria Street deacons, together with their minister, were formed into a committee to deal with the matter, and in July the land was bought for £500, the money necessary for the purpose being raised on mortgage. A temporary structure was erected in the shape of an iron chapel, capable of seating some 220 persons, and on Sunday, August 30th, 1885, the place was opened for worship, Mr. Wayman being the preacher. The cost of the chapel with its accessories, was £330. A Sunday

¹ “Fylde Congregational Magazine” for 1886.

² *Ibid.*

school was also commenced. The pulpit was supplied by neighbouring ministers until 1888, when the Rev. J. Newsholme, late of Leyland, was appointed Mr. Wayman's assistant, his duties being mainly at South Shore. There is every prospect of a strong and useful church here at no very distant time.

IX.—INGLEWHITE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

INGLEWHITE, in the township of Goosnargh, some eight miles north of Preston, has had Congregational worship since the early part of this century. It is not clear whether the cause originated with the Rev. D. Edwards, of Elswick, or with the church at Kirkham. Certain it is that Mr. Edwards was intimately associated with its early life; for a time he arranged the supplies, and was one of the first trustees of the chapel; and it is equally certain that the first appearance of Inglewhite in the County Union records is in connection with the Kirkham minister. Writing on the 14th of January, 1815, from Kirkham, Mr. Capper, the minister, states that "he had preached occasionally at Inglewhite, which he considered to be a very promising interest." The Rev. R. M. Griffiths, who succeeded Mr. Capper at Kirkham, reports in 1817 that he "preaches once a fortnight to about seventy or eighty persons" at Inglewhite. It was a long way—some thirteen miles—for the Kirkham minister to itinerate; and it shows how many were the hardships and inconveniencies of a country minister's life a century ago. In 1818 the Elswick minister undertook to arrange for the supply of the pulpit on Sunday afternoons, and the year following it is said that the Rev. John Richards, of Walkerfold, had preached here occasionally, aided by two laymen. The cottage in which worship was held was occupied by John Lofthouse. In 1826 a chapel was erected, the site being bought "from the late James Sidgreaves, Esq., of Inglewhite Lodge, a Roman Catholic, for the sum of eight pounds." It was obtained, says Mr. Cookson, by "a sharp manœuvre. A pretence being set up, and some sham preparations made for erecting a Dissenting Chapel near to the south entrance gate of Inglewhite Lodge, the good-natured, but unsuspecting, gentleman

¹ County Union Report for 1815, p. 9.

above named, in order to obviate those religionists planting their temple and propagating views so diametrically opposed to his own, so near to his door, consented to sell the land in question—the plot the promoters of the intended chapel desired.”¹ The chapel was built by money left for the purpose by “John Birch, of Lower Trotter Hill, Goosnargh, whose will bears date 31st August, 1816, and whose personal estate (the deceased had no real estate) was sworn under £1,500. He left the whole of his property, with the exception of eight small legacies amounting to £85, to three trustees, namely—Ambrose Winder, Jonathan Kirkham, and the Rev. David Edwards, for the purpose of establishing and endowing as their means afforded, a chapel as above, at Inglewhite, aforesaid. John Birch died on the 1st day of October, 1823; accordingly, in 1826, the present chapel was erected at the cost of £250 (the carting of the materials probably was given), and the small farm at Lower Trotter Hill and Moss Dale, on Eccles Moss, containing 7a. 3r. 28p. statute, was purchased for £450. The trustees have also procured a cottage and garden in Goosnargh called Mill Cottage, for the sum of £130, and another cottage and garden at Inglewhite, contiguous to the chapel, for the modest sum of £55.”² In more recent years, also, Richard Kirkham, of Goosnargh, who died June 15th, 1870, left £500 towards the chapel Endowment Fund. The service for the opening of the chapel took place on June 27, 1826, when the Rev. J. Speakman, of Tockholes, preached in the morning, and the Rev. L. Forster, of Blackburn, in the evening. Other ministers assisting were the Revs. D. Edwards, of Elswick, and D. T. Carnson, of Preston. In the same year a church was formed, the first pastor of which was the Rev. John Anyon. He was born at Whittle, near Chorley, and attended the Congregational Sunday School at Chorley. He had no collegiate training, and was ordained at Inglewhite on May 6th, 1828, the Revs. R. Slate, J. Deakin, R. M. Griffiths, and D. T. Carnson performing the service. Mr. Anyon removed in November, 1830, to Pendlebury, where he laboured for fifteen years. His last charge was Ramsbottom, where he ministered for twenty-two years, dying there November 7th, 1867, aged seventy-two years. The Rev. William Hackett suc-

¹ “Goosnargh : Past and Present,” p. 152.

² *Ibid*, p. 153.

ceeded Mr. Anyon at Inglewhite in 1831. In that year also the church became a recipient from the funds of the Union to the extent of £20. In addition to his own place, Mr Hackett preached alternately at Broughton and Brock Bottom on Sabbath evenings. The Union Reports continue to speak of much useful work at this station until 1838, when it is said to be "unhappily agitated by contentions and divisions. Mr. Hackett had left in November, 1837, for Reeth, in Yorkshire. In 1863 he settled at Forton, and remained there for three years. Subsequently he had charge for a short time of the little chapel at Cornah Row, midway between Kirkham and Elswick. He died September 1st, 1882, aged eighty-four years, and lies interred in the graveyard of Forton Chapel. The Rev. George Berry was the next minister. Born at Ingleton, January 23rd, 1811, of Church of England parents, he became a Dissenter from conviction. He joined the High Street Congregational Church at Lancaster, and to attend Sabbath service had to walk a distance of fourteen miles or so. In June, 1839, he became the minister of Inglewhite Chapel, where he remained until 1844, in which year he removed to Tosside, Yorkshire. After nearly ten years' useful service there, he accepted a call to Lower Chapel, Darwen, where he laboured for twenty-three years. He died in retirement at Darwen, November 18th, 1886, and was interred in the cemetery there on the 21st. His son is the Rev. R. Berry, of Islington. The Rev. R. Barker followed Mr. Berry, at Inglewhite in 1845, and left in 1853. No successor was appointed until 1861, when the Rev. P. Haworth, who had previously been a town missionary, entered upon duty as minister. In 1863 he resigned for Clough Foot, near Todmorden, where he laboured for three years. Mr. Haworth's next pastorate was Martin Top, near Clitheroe. He is now resident at Morecambe without charge. The pulpit remained vacant until 1871, when the Rev. John Spencer became the minister. He had previously laboured at Hambledon, Bucks, Garstang, and Kirkby Lonsdale. In 1879 he resigned, and also withdrew from the ministry after nearly forty years of service. He resides at Barrow-in-Furness. The present minister, the Rev. John Hargreaves, began his duties as such on the first Sunday in May, 1880. The chapel, which seats 200 people, has recently been renovated at a cost of £252 9s. 1½d., and a school built for £168 17s. The premises are free from debt.

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE WYRE TO THE LUNE.



I.—PREESALL CONGREGATIONAL CHAPEL.

PREESALL is described as “a township with Hackinsall in the parish of Lancaster, hundred of Lonsdale, south of the Sands, $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles W. from Garstang. Inhabitants, 700.”¹ Baines says that it is a “part of the Chapelry of Stalmine, and the cemetery for the chapelry is in this township. The most remarkable natural object in this township,” he continues, “is Preesall Hill, from which there is a fine view of the surrounding country. Mr. Just and the Rev. Wm. Thornber found traces round its summit of a bank and fosse.”² From Fleetwood it is not more than a couple of miles, but the mouth of the Wyre has to be crossed—easy enough in fine weather, but in rough, even experienced seamen do not smile at the task. When, however, that has been accomplished, the road leading to Garstang and Lancaster will be readily found, two miles along which will be seen the building of which we are in quest. This is the little Congregational Chapel. It stands in a beautifully sequestered spot, and has a good yard in front. Viewed laterally it appears a little odd—is like a two-volume novel. That is, it has been put up at twice. The front is new, and quite imposing. It contains two coloured windows, and a large entrance door, over which is a stone with the following inscription:—

BETHEL,
1836.
ENLARGED,
1888.

The door opens into a small vestibule, at the other side of which is the pulpit, beneath which is the singing pew. In each side of the

¹ “The New Lancashire Gazetteer,” p. 137.

² “History of Lancashire” (Ed. 1870), Vol. ii., p. 542.

chapel is a large coloured window. The forms (for pews are not used) are all new and made of pitchpine. The side walls belonged to the original chapel, which was small and square. Attached to the chapel behind is the school, the roof of which it is intended to elevate by and by, so that it may be uniform with that of the chapel. There is a gallery, part in the chapel and part in the school, which is used for school purposes. The older part is white-washed outside, and so contrasts with the new red brick structure to which it is joined. A bell on the top of the school calls the worshippers together five minutes before service time, and then in truly orthodox style, as the minister enters the pulpit, chimes slowly and softly until its tones are lost. The alterations noted give sitting-room for about 50 persons more than formerly, and now the chapel will accommodate about 200. The cost of the whole undertaking (which has been defrayed) was £230, and the chapel was re-opened on Good Friday, April 19th, 1888.

As in so many other parts of the Fylde, so at Preesall, Congregationalism owes its origin to the untiring activity of the Rev. D. Edwards, the Elswick minister. At a meeting of the Preston District of the Lancashire Congregational Union, held in the vestry of High Street Chapel, Lancaster, on the 2nd and 3rd of March, 1830, the Rev. D. Edwards "mentioned a large district of our county over Wyre, containing Stalmin, Rawcliffe, Pilling, Hambleton, Preesall, and respective neighbourhoods, all destitute of the Gospel, and ready to attend it if preached. On this statement it was unanimously resolved that the Revs. D. Edwards, E. Edwards, and J. Anyon, with W. Bell, Esq., surgeon, and Mr. Timothy Parkinson, be appointed a sub-committee to arrange and take measures for the employment of an itinerant in this large and important district; the Rev. D. Edwards to be secretary." At the half-yearly meeting of the district, held at Garstang, on the 5th of October following, it was reported:—"That a vote of £20 had been obtained from the annual meeting of the County Union towards trying to introduce the gospel in this district. That *three* places had been opened for preaching, viz., Preesall, Hambleton, and Rawcliffe. Into Stalmin and Pilling no entrance had yet been

¹ "Minutes of the Preston District," March, 1830.

obtained. These places had hitherto been supplied in rotation by ministers of the district. The congregations good, and prospects promising ; a plan had been arranged for supplying these places for a short time longer by the neighbouring pastors."¹ The next Report, March, 1831, gives the date when preaching commenced in this district as June, 1830, since which time, with few exceptions, services continued to be held fortnightly. In September, 1831, it is said : "That Mr. Evans, a student from Blackburn Academy, had spent a month there during his vacation, and that since his return Mr. D. Edwards and Mr. Morgan had visited and preached at the stations on the Sabbath, the attendance being very encouraging."² This Mr. Evans was afterwards minister at Ulverston for many years. Previous to this, however, a Mr. Hunter, from the North, had been engaged by the Union as a supply at Preesall for a short time. The reports from this station continue to be encouraging, extracts from which are here given :—

"[Feb., 1832.] At Rawcliffe, Hambleton, and Preesall the preaching houses are generally full of attentive hearers—especially at Preesall.³

"[Feb., 1833.] Preaching is continued at Rawcliffe, Hambleton, and Preesall. Average attendance at Rawcliffe on Sabbath afternoon is from 60 to 70, and at Preesall, in the evening, from 70 to 80 ; the hearers are attentive. At Preesall there is reason to hope a number of souls have been born again by means of the Gospel, and a few private meetings have been held among them, pleasing and profitable.⁴

"[Oct., 1833.] Aspect of affairs said to be encouraging. A commodious place for a school and for preaching, very much needed at Preesall. A place for preaching wanted also at Rawcliffe."⁵

In 1834, the Rev. Wm. Gothard came here from Knottingley, in Yorkshire. He is said to have laboured previously at Balderstone.

The next report is copied in full, because of the interesting items it contains :—

¹ "Minutes of the Preston District."

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

PREESALL ITINERANCY,—Report furnished by Rev. D. Edwards on behalf of sub-committee read, which stated that there was preaching at Preesall in the afternoon and evening of the Lord's Day, and also on the Wednesday evening, at Rawcliffe on the Sabbath forenoon, and on Tuesday evening once a fortnight, and at Pilling once a month on Monday evening; that the attendance at Preesall averaged 70 on Sabbath afternoon, 60 in the evening, 27 at week-day preaching, and 15 at the prayer meeting, and that there were 65 Sabbath school children, with 9 teachers; that at Rawcliffe about 50 persons attended on the Sabbath forenoon, and 40 on the (Tuesday) week evening, and at Pilling about 30 on the Monday evening; that Mr. Gothard had laboured at these places for about 6 months diligently and usefully, the congregations having been regular, the people confirmed in the truth, and the Sabbath school established; that a school would be opened at Rawcliffe if a room could be obtained; that the sub-committee considered the itinerancy very important to that dark depraved part of the country, and again earnestly recommended it to the encouragement and support of the County Union. A letter from Mr. Gothard was also read, which stated that tracts were distributed in Stalmin and Preesall; that the Sabbath school teachers, who were diligent and zealous, held a monthly prayer meeting; that there were a few persons whose piety appeared genuine; that a meeting for reading, prayer, and Christian conversation had recently been established on a Friday evening; that there was a prayer meeting at Rawcliffe on the Sabbath evening, and that it was expected there would soon be preaching once a fortnight at Pilling.¹

In the following September (1835) Mr. Gothard stated at the District Meeting, "That a church had been formed at Preesall, consisting of eight members." The names of these eight members are—Mrs. Agnes Hodgkinson, Mrs. Gothard, Mr. Robert Bibby, Mrs. Robert Bibby (senior), Mr. John Preston, Mrs. Ann Preston, Mr. Richard Dickenson, and Mrs. Mary Dickenson. To this list must be added Mr. and Mrs. Singleton, who joined immediately after.

As yet, it will be remembered there was no chapel at Preesall. This little church of eight members was formed in the house known as Bibby's Farm, occupied and owned by Thomas and Agnes Hodgkinson, and still in the possession of their children. Here it was that services were held as stated in the foregoing extracts; and that they might worship "safely" under their vine and fig tree, and none "make them afraid," the house was "licensed" for public

¹ "Minutes of the Preston District," February, 1835.

worship. Pleasant memories are yet preserved by the older inhabitants in these parts of the good old minister from Elswick—the Rev. D. Edwards—unto whom Fylde Nonconformity is so greatly indebted. The present occupants of Bibby's Farm tell how they have often watched him set out for Elswick—a distance of eight or nine miles—late in the evening on horseback after the preaching service was over. It deserves also to be recorded that the Hodgkinsons, who first opened their house for the preaching of the Gospel at Preesall, and who are related to the Hodgkinsons of Elswick, are one of the oldest and staunchest Nonconformist families in the Fylde.

The new chapel was erected and opened in 1836, and an account of the service is here given:—

“On Wednesday, December 28th, 1836, a new Congregational chapel was opened for Divine worship at Preesall, on which occasion the Rev. Samuel Bell, from Lancaster, preached in the forenoon, and the Rev. D. T. Carnson, from Preston, in the afternoon. The chapel is a neat brick building, capable of seating upwards of 200 persons. It has been erected at the expense of about £250, the people connected with the place having carted materials gratuitously. . . . The congregations on the day of opening filled the place, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather. The sum of £15 was collected, and Mr. Gothard and his people enter upon the occupancy of their new chapel with pleasing prospects of usefulness and comfort.”¹

A debt of £40 remained upon the chapel after the re-opening services, a heavy burden for so small a people, but in a few years it disappeared. The chapel as thus built was very different from what it is to-day. It had neither vestry nor Sunday school, and its surroundings are thus described in homely terms by one who has been connected with it from the first day until now:—“At this time the chapel was enclosed with a high sandy cop, with a few hawthorn and stunted plain trees growing on the top, and plenty of whins.”

Fifty years ago Dissent had much to contend against in our

¹ “*Evangelical Magazine*” for 1837, p. 80.

villages, and Mr. Gothard, writing in February, 1838, tells about two of the church members having been compelled by their employer to leave the chapel and worship at church. The reports for several years vary but little. They tell of steady growth, and of happy relations between pastor and people until March, 1844, when Mr. Gothard stated, at the District Meeting, that "circumstances of a troublesome and disuniting tendency had arisen at Preesall," and that he was willing to resign. In April of the following year he withdrew from the pastorate, and went to reside at Leeds. After Mr. Gothard's departure, Preesall occupies a secondary place, and is worked along with Fleetwood, though it remained a separate church. Notices of the ministers who served it along with Fleetwood will be more appropriately given in the account of that church. In 1848 it is said that "at Preesall the congregation has lately declined, in consequence of the place not having been so regularly supplied as when Mr. Best was stationed at Fleetwood."¹ Differences, too, seem to have arisen between the two churches, so that the District Meeting "earnestly and affectionately recommends the churches at Preesall and Fleetwood to make arrangements for the amalgamation of the two churches." A resolution of this kind was passed several years together, and early in Mr. Lings's ministry he was able to say that "the differences which had existed were dying away." The two next extracts refer to important alterations in the building, and read as follows:

"[Feb., 1858.] At Preesall the chapel has been enlarged at a cost of £156, which had been collected, except a small portion which was looked for at the opening services."² *

"[Feb., 1859.] The new schoolrooms at Preesall have been completed at a cost of £182 2s. 10d., and opened free from debt."³ *

Mrs. Hodgkinson and Mrs. Singleton, already named amongst the first members of the church, rendered invaluable assistance in collecting money for this work. To them and their families the little cause at Preesall is greatly indebted.

¹ "Minutes of the Preston District," February, 1848.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

* I imagine these two extracts refer to one and the same thing.

In the minutes for 1863 is a touching reference to an epidemic which had "carried off several Sabbath school children," and of these many "gave affecting and satisfactory evidence of their faith and hope in Jesus Christ."

During the ministry of Mr. Lings, in addition to the alterations noted, the wall and railings surrounding the chapel were put up, and the place reseated. His interest in Preesall from first to last was deep and strong; and he contributed generously of his means as well as of his time and energy for its upbuilding. The withdrawal of Mr. Lings from the Fleetwood pastorate in 1874 left a vacancy also at Preesall. This was filled up, early in 1875, by the Rev. G. Price, who had previously been at Longridge for about three years. He remained only a few months, leaving not only the church but the denomination, and became a minister among the New Connexion Methodists. A new departure was taken in 1879, when "The Fylde Itinerancy" was formed. Poulton-le-Fylde, Hambleton, Bispham, Preesall, Stalmine, Staining, Singleton, Bethesda (Blackpool), and St. Anne's-on-the-Sea were covered by this name. The Revs. J. Shuker and P. Webster worked this station conjointly, the former residing at Poulton, the latter at Preesall. Occasional help also was given by other ministers and laymen. Mr. Webster's services were principally confined to Hambleton and Preesall, and the Lancashire Congregational Calendar for 1883, says:—

"The work proceeds with great efficiency, Rev. P. Webster being resident here. The congregation keeps up its numbers, and the Sunday School and Band of Hope are well organised and flourishing."

The Calendar for the next year says:—

"At the annual gathering on Christmas Day there was the largest attendance ever recorded, and during the evening the Rev. H. W. Smith, in the name of the friends in Fleetwood and Preesall, presented the Rev. P. Webster with a purse containing £8, as a token of loving regard and in appreciation of his services."

The Fylde Itinerancy broke up in 1885 consequent upon St. Annes becoming an Independent church, and Preesall and Hamble-

ton fell to the lot of Mr. Webster. The year following he removed to Forton, where he still labours. In 1887 Preesall passed again under the care of the Fleetwood minister, who still has charge of it. From the Calendar for 1889 the following is extracted :—

“This station enjoys the superintendence of the Rev. A. Bailey, of Fleetwood. The congregations are excellent, and much spiritual success has this year been manifest, especially among the young people; twelve members have been thereby added to the church. £100 have been raised, which does not yet appear on the schedule, for school enlargement, and it is hoped, during 1889, to complete the building and pay the cost. The secretary himself took the afternoon service at Preesall on second Sunday in October, and was much pleased with the large congregation, and the evident earnestness of the people was very refreshing. Mr. Bailey has certainly recompense in the prosperity of his church, even though his duties especially in winter, are very arduous. This union owes him many thanks for his self-sacrificing labours in this village.”

It will be evident from this passage that the little church at Preesall was never in a healthier and happier condition than now. The number of members in fellowship is 46; of Sunday scholars, 130.

II.—FLEETWOOD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

SIXTY years ago Fleetwood had no existence either as a town or village. The promontory upon which the town stands was at that time a huge rabbit warren and resort for sea birds. “Formerly,” says Thornber, “this retired spot attracted much notice; crowds, during the summer months, resorting to it to admire the immense flock of sea birds, which so thickly strewed the shore with their eggs as to require great circumspection by the pedestrian, lest he should trample them beneath his feet. This constant intrusion upon their haunts, and the robbing of their nests, caused them at

length to seek more retired retreats in the Isle of Walney, Peel Island, and Fowlney, where they rear their young with less molestation on the sandy beach and among the star hills of those places."¹ In an old map bearing date 1806, from Rossall Point to the mouth of the Wyre the only object marked is a "Summer House," and in the map of 1824 engraved for Baines's "Lancashire," the whole district is marked "Rabbit Warren." The town owes its origin and existence, even as it does its name, to Sir Peter Hesketh Fleetwood, then of Rossall Hall, the lord of the manor. "In 1836," says Porter, "the first house of Fleetwood was erected."² Writing in 1837, the Rev. William Thornber vividly describes the changes which were going on in this once desolate spot. "Vigorous operations," he says, "have already commenced; a few houses and an excellent hotel have been erected, the principal streets marked out by the plough, and covered with their first coating of gravel; and the spirited proprietor, P. Hesketh Fleetwood, is now laying out the tasteful pleasure grounds for the accommodation of those whom curiosity or interest may induce to visit this once dreary scene. The busy tramp of men is putting to flight the ancient possessors of the soil, the rabbits, who, like the wretched inhabitants of India and America, must either cede their territory to their more powerful invaders, or fall victims to their destroying power."³ It is not necessary to relate further the story of the growth of this town. Let anyone to-day look at its beautiful promenade, its palatial residences, its handsome churches, belonging to almost every denomination, the huge boats which daily leave its port, and the eight or ten thousand people who find here a home, then call up its appearance sixty years ago, and he will have before him a striking witness to the energy, skill, and industry of the Lancashire people.

Congregationalism here is almost as old as the town itself, and it is the offspring of the little Congregational church at Preesall. It was one of the places at which the Rev. Wm. Gothard, the Preesall minister, preached in 1838, and the attendance is given as thirty. In September of the following year Mr. Gothard suggested to the

¹ "History of Blackpool," p. 313.

² "History of the Fylde," p. 81.

³ "History of Blackpool," pp. 313, 314.

Preston District Meeting "the desirability of making arrangements for preaching at Fleetwood on the Sabbath."¹ Mr. Dawson, of Lancaster, and the Revs. D. T. Carnson and R. Slate, of Preston, were appointed "to procure the permanent preaching of the Gospel at Fleetwood." At the February meeting, however (1840), it was reported that "it was difficult to procure a place for preaching at Fleetwood, and that the Sabbath would be most suitable for public worship at that station." Under date February, 1841, we have the following :—

"Respecting Fleetwood, Mr. Gothard's letter stated that there was preaching there every Sabbath evening, that it was intended soon to open a Sabbath school ; that every house was supplied with loan tracts ; that a Christian church had been formed, and that there was every prospect of a thriving interest."²

The first preaching place in Fleetwood used by the Congregationalists was a house in Flag Street, occupied by Mrs. Garner, sister of the Rev. D. T. Carnson, of Preston. There the little church of twelve members was formed in 1840. Afterwards the worshippers removed to a joiner's shop in Aughton Street, where they remained for about eight years. The Sunday School referred to in the above extract was originated in this joiner's shop in April, 1841, and one of the original scholars, Mr. Alexander Davies, is still connected with the church, and one of its warmest supporters. The church at this time was a kind of branch of Preesall, and the pulpit was supplied mainly by the Rev. Wm. Gothard. There is nothing of interest in the minutes until we come to February, 1843, when Mr. Gothard reported "that considering the very bad state of trade in the place both the congregation and Sabbath School were such as to deserve regard and attention, and that they were much indebted to Mr. R. Aughton, of Preston, who had gratuitously provided them with a neat and comfortable room as a place of worship."³ This was the joiner's shop already named. Mr. Gothard resigned in 1845, and for further

¹ "Minutes of the Preston District."

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

information respecting him the reader is referred to the previous article. Amongst the minutes for February, 1846 appears the following :—

“The letter from the church at this place states that since the removal of Mr. Gothard they have been supplied by various ministers and students, but that the plan has not succeeded in increasing the congregation. Since about Christmas they have had the services of Mr. Cuzner, late of Dartford, in Kent, and that there has been a considerable increase in the attendance. It was stated at the meeting that the people had entered into a weekly subscription at Fleetwood, which produces about 10s. weekly. The land for a chapel had been conveyed to trustees, and it is expected the building will be commenced in the spring. The delegates, on behalf of Mr. Cuzner, who is at present supplying this station, presented letters to the meeting, but they were not received, as the business connected with providing supplies is in the hands of a sub-committee appointed for that purpose.”

The new chapel was begun in 1847, land for which had been generously given by Sir P. Hesketh Fleetwood, and the church sought the Rev. Robert Best, from Homerton College, as its minister. Mr. Best spent several months here, and had a good deal to do with the erection of the chapel. The whole story of his life at Fleetwood is most curious and interesting. He shall relate it himself in his own inimitable way. He says :—

Twelve months before leaving College my last vacation was spent in Lancashire, where I came at the invitation of a Manchester friend, who had secured me two Sundays' supply at Fleetwood. The town was just then being founded, and great things were prophesied that it was going to be a second Liverpool. There was preaching in a joiner's shop over a guano warehouse. The people wished me to be their minister. I could not think of it until my college days were over. They said that they would wait for me twelve months, and pray for me all the time. They did. I went again the next year, and was there six months. I laid the foundation bricks of the Chapel there—20 of them—one frosty morning, which Mr. Drummond, the contractor, handed to me. That was the only foundation-stone ceremony—lasting ten minutes—two persons being present, and ending in hurrah! I fully intended spending my life there, thinking it would be something noble to stamp a Christian character upon the infant days of a new seaport. They

invited me again to be their minister, but they had first to secure the consent of the County Union. The Union hesitated (by one vote of the Executive) to give that consent until the chapel was built; writing and congratulating me on success, and hoping that I would stay and wait. I got their letter on a Friday, and, seeing in it as I thought an infringement of Congregational principles, and that there I should be under two masters, I resolved to leave, prepared a farewell sermon on the Saturday, preached it on the Sunday, and was off on the Monday, with nothing before me but a complete blank and a heart trusting in the Lord.¹

Mr. Best's subsequent career as a Congregational minister at Kirkham and Bolton for over forty years, was given in the article on Kirkham, and so does not need to be repeated here. The new chapel was opened on May 31st, 1848, when the Revs. Dr. Raffles, Dr. Vaughan, and Alex. Fraser, M.A., of Blackburn, were the preachers. The chapel thus opened was not free from debt. Subscriptions generously poured in from all parts of the country, still some two or three hundred pounds remained—a burden not easily borne. A special effort was made in 1854 to remove that burden. The following is a copy of the circular issued at the time :—

“Manchester, February 10th, 1854.

“DEAR SIR,—A few years ago Edward Dawson, Esq., of Aldcliffe Hall, near Lancaster, Mr. Hamer, of Preston, and myself undertook the erection of a chapel at Fleetwood, sufficiently capacious for the probable wants of the place, and to be free from debt. The project met with general favour, and the amount of subscriptions obtained and promised was large enough to cover the whole expenditure. The entire cost of the building (which, however, is still unenclosed with a wall) has been about £1,600; and this would have been wholly cleared off long ago if all the subscriptions had been paid up. But through commercial failures a deficiency occurred to the serious extent of upwards of £300. To meet this deficiency further subscriptions have been obtained, which have reduced it to about £215. We are very desirous that this balance should be cleared off, and the chapel left without any encumbrance upon it, according to our first undertaking; and I

¹ “Memoir of the Rev. R. Best,” by the Rev. J. Johnston, p. 35.

shall feel gratified and obliged if you should feel at liberty to assist in this object.—I am, yours respectfully,

“WILLIAM WEBSTER.

“At the request of the Rev. R. Fletcher.”

The first minister of the new building was the Rev. John Farnham Guenett. He was trained at Western College, Plymouth, entered the ministry in 1836, and came to Fleetwood from Newent, in Gloucestershire. He began work at Fleetwood in the beginning of February, 1849, and remained only until December, 1850. There is a note in the minutes of the District Meeting for February, 1850, to the effect that “the place has been fitted up with gas and heated with hot air during the past year at considerable expense, the amount of which has been paid.” The following resolution also was passed :—

“That this meeting earnestly and affectionately recommends the churches at Preesall and Fleetwood to make arrangements for the amalgamation of the two churches as early as convenient, and that the Rev. R. M. Griffiths be requested to visit the friends at Preesall and Fleetwood for this purpose.”

Mr. Guenett went from Fleetwood to Bury St. Edmunds, in Suffolk, where he stayed for about seven years. Afterwards he was at Point-in-View, Lympstone, where he died June 12th, 1889. His successor at Fleetwood was the Rev. David Bisset Mackenzie, whose call is dated August 17th, 1851. This he accepted Nov. 15th of that year. He was born at Dundee in the year 1797, and was trained for the ministry at Glasgow. He was ordained in 1822 as pastor of the church at Falkirk ; afterwards he was at Elie, in Fife. He then visited England, and amongst the many places at which he supplied was Fleetwood, where, as previously stated, he eventually settled. He resigned his charge here on the 30th of March, 1853, and went to Thurso, in Scotland. From Thurso he removed to Doune, and after labouring here a few years, he withdrew from the ministry, and went to reside in Edinburgh. He died suddenly of paralysis on the 4th of July, 1866, and was interred in the Dean Cemetery, Edinburgh. The Rev. Henry Lings, who was trained at Airedale College, entered the ministry

in 1841. He laboured for some years at Accrington, and succeeded Mr. Mackenzie at Fleetwood in April, 1854. Year by year the reports given at the District Meetings concerning Fleetwood and Preesall during his ministry were most encouraging. The grant asked for diminished until 1860, when the church resolved to declare itself free from pecuniary assistance. Mr. Lings's letter to the District Meeting held at Lancaster on the 13th and 14th of February, 1860, stated :—

“That the church at Fleetwood had felt anxious for some time to relieve the County Union from the necessity of affording them assistance, and that by adopting the system of weekly offerings and the consequent development of a spirit of liberality, they were enabled to attain pecuniary independence.”¹

Mr. Lings continued to labour here with acceptance until the 31st of December, 1879, when he resigned. Important internal alterations were made in the chapel during his ministry—a ministry covering almost one-half of the time the church has been in existence. He resided for some time in Fleetwood after his retirement, but now, from considerations of health, lives at Mentone, in the south of France. He, however, occasionally visits the old place, and meets always with a warm reception.

The next minister was the Rev. P. Rathbone Berry. He was born at Warrington, but spent his early manhood days at Southport, and was a member of the Chapel Street Congregational Church there. His ministerial training was received at Airedale College, whence he came to Fleetwood in May, 1874. He remained only until May, 1876. In 1877 he settled at New Windsor, Salford, where he laboured until disease brought about his retirement. He preached for the last time on July 16th, 1884, and went for rest and change first to Whaley Bridge, in Cheshire, and then to Fleetwood. At this place he died on the 31st of August, 1884, at the early age of thirty-nine years. He was interred at Salford Cemetery on September 4th. His brother is the Rev. C. A. Berry, formerly of Bolton, now of Wolverhampton. The Rev. H. W. Smith was Mr. Berry's successor at Fleetwood. He was trained at Hackney

¹ “Minutes of the Preston District.”

College, and began ministerial work in 1872 at Stony Stratford, Buckinghamshire. His letter accepting the invitation to Fleetwood bears date December 8th, 1876. He preached his last sermon as minister here on the last Sunday in January, 1884, and removed to the Centenary Church, Lancaster, where he still labours. He will be long remembered at Fleetwood. The present minister—the Rev. Amos Bailey—entered the ministry in 1877, and had as his first charge the “Upper Chapel,” Westbury, in Wiltshire. Thence he removed to Oswaldtwistle, near Accrington, and entered upon his Fleetwood pastorate on the first Sunday in June, 1884. Between minister and people the happiest relations exist, and his work has been abundantly fruitful. In addition to his pastoral duties he interests himself in the general well-being of the town where he lives. He is a member of the Fleetwood School Board, and originated the Hospital Aid Society, of which he has all along been Secretary. Mr. Bailey is the son of the late Rev. G. Bailey, who, after more than forty years’ life as a Congregational minister in Wiltshire, died November 7, 1889. His brother, the Rev. G. T. Bailey, is a Baptist minister, late of Haslingden.

The chapel, which is a brick structure with short square tower, will seat about 600 persons. It is a neat, light, and comfortable-looking building, certainly very different internally from what it was when first erected. It is galleried round, has a good organ, a platform pulpit, and is easy to speak in. The galleries were added in part during Mr. Smith’s ministry, and in part during Mr. Bailey’s. The school and classrooms are underneath, and the minister’s vestry is near the main entrance. The preacher, therefore, has the whole length of the chapel to go before he reaches the pulpit—an ordeal somewhat trying to men of a nervous temperament. Many better class people bring their families to Fleetwood during the summer months, and the Congregational Church, equally with those of other denominations, profits by their presence, but it is not so dependent upon visitors as churches in watering places frequently are. There are about 200 communicants, and over 1300 Sunday scholars.

III.—FORTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

THE nearest station to Forton is Bay Horse, which is some fifteen miles from Preston, and four or five from Lancaster. On leaving the station the road winds to the left, by and by cuts almost at right angles the main road from Preston and Garstang to Lancaster, and goes on to Cockerham. Our way, however, lies down another road which branches from it to the left, and bears the name of "Wallace Road." It is narrow, o'ergrown with trees, which in some parts so interlace as to form almost a grove, and is very old. In the days when the relationships between England and the country north of the Tweed were not so happy as they now are, bands of Scottish warriors, smarting under wrongs they had received at the hands of their English brothers, frequently crossed the Borders, harried and laid waste the northern parts of England. Preston was burnt in 1323 by the Scottish King, Robert Bruce, and his predecessor, the brave Sir William Wallace, once at least visited Lancaster for pillage and plunder. It was down this narrow lane that he is said to have marched his troops, from which circumstance it derives its name. A few minutes' walk will bring us to the house of the genial, good-natured minister, and half a mile farther on is the little chapel itself. It is situated at the bend of Wallace Road, and is in the centre of a very considerable graveyard. It may be worth while devoting a sentence or two to the bearings of the township of Forton, in which the chapel stands. Wallace Road, already named, separates the two parishes of Cockerham and Shireshead. Baines says of Forton, that it is "partly in Garstang parish and partly in Cockerham, and also extends into both Amounderness and Lonsdale hundreds."¹ Prior to the dissolution of the monasteries, both great and small, by Henry VIII., Cockersand Abbey was an important institution in this part of Lancashire, and possessed vast estates. An English charter, dated 1363, names Forton as the property of the Abbot of Cockersand:—

"By ye Gyft of Graunt & Feoffment of William of Loncastre hold, Lord of Wyresdale, and of other diuersez Senyours, to holdt

¹ "History of Lancashire" (Ed. 1870), Vol. ii., p. 591.

theym and theyr Successourez in pure and perpetuell almons forev^r more, as theyre ryght and the ryght of theyr kyrke of Seynt Elyn.”¹

In Vol. lvii. of the Chetham Society's series is printed the “Rental de Cokersande” for the year 1501, which is interesting as showing the extent of the possessions of the abbey at that time. A considerable part of “Salforthschyr” and “Derbyschyr” (West Derby), and nearly the whole of the land from Garstang to Lancaster, constituted the abbey estates. The names of some twenty persons residing in Forton, who paid rent to the Abbot of Cocker-sand, are given in the list. In the year 1543, Henry VIII. granted to Thos. Holt, Esq., “all those manors of Cunsough and Forton, late belonging to the monastery of Cockersande.”² The proprietors of the township are now numerous; indeed most of the people who reside here own their own farms and estates. Near to the chapel is a little cluster of houses, and not far off is a veritable Board school! Yes, even this quiet, rustic, out-of-the-way place sets a splendid example to many a large town in the matter of education. No Dissenting children here are snubbed and persecuted because they are such, or obliged to learn catechisms and creeds, which neither they nor their parents believe. The ratepayers' money here is not used in keeping up a form of religion to which they honestly object, or in perpetuating schools over which they have no control. A lofty range of hills—the Penine Range—stands boldly forth a few miles to the east, giving to the general outlook a very interesting appearance. The chapel stands a little back from Wallace Road, which it faces. A neat walk leads up to the porch which abuts the building. There are five windows in the front side—three above, arched over the top, and two below (the place of the third being taken by the doorway), which are shorter and square. The windows contain small panes such as appear in buildings erected about the end of last century. On the other side of the chapel there are only two windows, consequently, when viewed from within, the absence of uniformity becomes a little striking. The pulpit is fixed at the west end of the chapel, and at the east is a small raised gallery, so that those behind can see quite as well as

¹ “History of Lancashire” (Ed. 1870), Vol. ii., p. 591.

² *Ibid.*

those in front. A good sized niche has been scooped out of the wall behind the pulpit, where the minister can recline pleasantly out of sight, and almost hearing, too, until he is needed. To the left of the pulpit is a small communion, and to the right a diminutive singing pew. The chapel is lofty, airy, and light, has quite a cheerful look about it ; in short, is just such a place as to make a dull sermon in it an impossibility. It was repewed and beautified some twenty years ago. Externally, also, the chapel has an inviting appearance. It is plain and square, made of strong stone, not adorned by the polish of our smoky towns, and appears as if it could live for many years to come. It is said to have been built in the year 1707, but it must have been considerably altered or entirely rebuilt since then, for it has the look of a much later date. An old man who died some forty years ago, at the age of near 100 years, said that the chapel of 1707 was superseded about 1760 by the present building, whose erection he remembered. But even this second building does not look that age.¹ As already stated, it was considerably altered in 1870 ; it was then that the porch was added, the whole affair costing about £136. The chapel will seat comfortably about 200 persons. Close by, and in the graveyard already named, is a small building erected in 1836, access to which is by means of a flight of steps outside. It will accommodate some fifty persons, and is used for a Sunday school, and also for week evening services, the attendances at which are said to be unusually good. The graveyard has already been named as of considerable extent ; and yet it needs to be larger, for it is quite full, though we should not suppose so from its general appearance, for it contains but few tombstones, and these being chiefly upright headstones promiscuously planted here and there, give to it a peculiar aspect. The only tombstones of any interest are those which memorialise the ministers of the place, the inscriptions upon which will come more appropriately later. Besides these there are none of any considerable date, unless it be some that are broken, and from which the inscriptions have been obliterated.

¹ Since the above was written, the date stone of the old chapel has been found, and the figures 1707 can yet be traced upon it. It serves as the door step to the vestry. Surely it is desirable that some more worthy place for it should be found, where its preservation will be ensured.

The origin of the Dissenting interest at Forton is thus accounted for by tradition. The Duke of Hamilton, who owned the land hereabouts, on coming into these parts brought with him a considerable number of Scotch people. From him they obtained a site upon which they built the chapel at Shireshead. When the Duke died, Lady Hamilton, who appears to have had no sympathy with Dissenters, came upon the worshippers and drove them all out of their chapel with a whip. These came to Forton, which was then all moorland, and erected the little chapel in 1707, which has its representative in the one still standing. The tradition is at fault in many respects, but especially in respect of the chapel at Shireshead. Harrison, in the year 1577, names the "Wire" as "running by Shireshead Chapel." In the Parliamentary Report of 1650 also is the following notice of the chapel and its minister :—

"And y^e said Jurors likewise say That y^e said Parish of Cockerham doth containe within it y^e severall Chappelles distant from their said pish Church as followeth, viz., Ellell Three myles, Shierside Three myles; And that y^e Incumbent officiating att y^e said Parish Church for y^e Tyme being is one Mr. Thomas Smith during y^e Secquestracon of Mr. William Calvert y^e vicar for delinquency. And y^e said Jurors further say That y^e said severall Chappells belonging to y^e said pish Church of Cockerham are pvided for as followeth, viz^t, ffifty pounds p ann allowed by Order from y^e Comitees of plundered Ministers to y^e said Chappell of Ellell; y^e Minister there Mr. Peter Atkinson; and that y^e said Chappell of Shierside hath no certaine Maintainance to their knowledge, the Minister therefor for y^e Tyme being Mr. John ffisher."‡

To this may be added a passage from another work :—

"*Shireshead*, certified £1 2s. od., Interest of money left by Will. 3 miles from the Parish Church. Duly served by y^e same Curate as officiates at Ellell, who, in Summer, preaches at both Chappells every Sunday, and in winter every other Sunday at each. This Chapel was in y^e hands of y^e Dissenters for some time, but recovered from y^m by the Duke of Hamilton, and Mr. Richmond,

¹ "Commonwealth Survey" (Record Society), Vol. i., p. 129.

then Vicar of Garstang, as Mr. Richmond informed me, anno 1720. 12s. per annum was formerly paid to this Chapel by y^e family of y^e Gerards; but y^e heiresse of that Estate, since her marriage to the Duke of Hamilton, hath withdrawn it.”¹

How this Episcopal chapel came into the hands of the Dissenters I do not know. Dobson, in his notes to Walkden’s Diary, suggests the following explanation:—

“It appears somewhat strange that Mr. Aray, who was educated for the Nonconformist ministry, should have officiated at an episcopal chapel. Shireshead, which is in the parish of Cockerham, was never a well-endowed living; and perhaps, like Longridge, at an earlier period, ‘being an obscure place, with a small salary, there was no great striving after it.’ The ducal family of Hamilton had possessions in that neighbourhood, and their patronage may have obtained his ministrations at Shireshead for a time, in the absence of a Conforming clergyman.”²

It is doubtful if the “duc family” had much sympathy with Dissenters; at any rate it is clear from the passage in “Notitia Cestriensis” above given that they helped in the ejection of the Dissenters from Shireshead. The tradition previously mentioned is therefore true to that extent, though whether the “whip” was used may be doubted. The first minister of this new chapel was the Rev. Eleazar Aray, just named, who had been expelled from Shireshead along with his people. He was trained by the Rev. Richard Frankland, whose academy at Rathmell he entered Feb. 21, 1698. He was on particularly intimate terms with Mr. Walkden, of Hesketh Lane, in whose diary are some very interesting references to him. Under date, January 7-9, 1725, the diarist says:—

Got my mare, and went direct to Garstang, and Mr. Aray being in town called me, and caused me to put my mare at the King’s Head. We went into the house, and a boy was with Mr. Aray, who had brought me half a windle of rye. I paid the boy 3s. 6d., and sat with Mr. Aray until I had spent my sixpence. William Charnock having some moneys demanded of him by Mr. Mason, which he said he owed him not, having ne’er received of

¹ “Notitia Cestriensis” (Chetham Society, Vol. xxii.), p. 407.

² “Peter Walkden’s Diary,” p. 5 (note).

Mr. Mason such goods as he demanded pay for, we went with him to Mr. Mason to inquire into the matter, and rectify the mistake ; but Mason stands in it that such goods were delivered to William Charnock's wife by his own hands : so that we did him no service ; so I and Mr. Aray and Richard Caiton came to my mare, had a pint of ale, and Mr. Aray rid home, and I and Richard Caiton followed on foot.

Was at Mr. Aray's till dinner was over ; then, at Mr. Aray's desire, I took my mare and went with him to Winmarleigh to see Mary Stersacre, who was indisposed. . . . Mr. Aray read the 7th of Eccles., and prayed. We set not long after ere we came thence, and at Four Lane Ends, in the lower road, we parted, having appointed to exchange on Sabbath day. We wished each other good success. I came by the Old Hollins, and over Wyre, through Scorton, to Brother Miller's direct.

Brother Miller having told me in Garstang how Oswald Crossgill would pay for the goods bought at his sale some time since, I determined to pay him, and remove the goods ; but not having so much money in my pocket as would do it, I was forced to borrow ; and having yesterday asked Mr. Aray the lend of 8s. 6d. for a month, but succeeded not, I purposed to try Nicholas Story, so got my mare and went to Nicholas Story's, and asked him the lend of it.¹

Mr. Dobson appropriately remarks upon this :—

“What a forcible illustration of the straitened means of two hard-working ministers of the Gospel.”²

Mr. Aray died on the 29th of April, 1729, and was interred at Forton. There is no memorial over him, but there is a gravestone over a son that he buried here, with the following inscription :—

HERE LIETH
THE BODY
OF IAMES
SON OF M^R ELE
AZAR ARAY
WHO DIED
OCT^R 15TH 17
21 IN THE
TENTH YEAR
OF HIS AGE

¹ Pp. 5, 6.

² Ibid. (note).

Mr. Walkden interested himself in the family after Mr. Aray's death. Several illustrations of this are to be met with in his diary, of which the following is one :—

Nov. 21 [1729]. I bought of Mrs. Aray, Ainsworth's works, fol., cost 7s. 6d; and Dr. Edward's *Veritas Redux* at 3s. 6d.; in 'all a 11s. I sold her a load of potatoes at 4s. 6d., and paid her 3s. in silver; the other 3s. 6d. I left to pay. So I got my mare and goods and came thence, having promised to send Mrs. Aray her potatoes on Monday or Tuesday next.¹

In the list of Presbyterian chapels and churches by Dr. Evans (1717-1729), Forton is joined to "Litham," and represented as having a congregation of 416 persons, with fifty county voters. The Rev. Mr. May is given as minister; but who he was and what became of him I have not been able to ascertain. The probability is that it is an error for Aray. Respecting the Dissenting congregations in the northern parts of Lancashire at this time, Dr. Halley has the following remarks :—

"They were small, and as almost all of them received assistance from the Presbyterian or from the Congregational Fund Board, we may infer that they were poor and feeble. In Preston the congregation of the Rev. John Parr numbered only one hundred and fifty persons, and in Lancaster that of the Rev. James Grimshaw two hundred and sixty. Each of these ministers received six pounds a year from the Presbyterian fund. The largest congregation in that division was at Forton and Lytham, which is represented as numbering four hundred and sixteen persons, of whom fifty were freeholders. Its minister was not a recipient from either of the London funds."²

The next minister was the Rev. Thomas Cooper, A.M. He was trained by the Rev. John Chorlton, of Manchester, and was minister at Bispham in 1716.³ He was a trustee of the chapel there, and is several times mentioned in Walkden's Diary. He was buried at Forton, and upon his tombstone is the following inscription, almost illegible :—

¹ P. 71.

² "Lancashire Puritanism and Nonconformity." Vol. ii., p. 325.

³ "Heywood's Diaries," by J. H. Turner. Vol. ii., p. 321.

Here lieth the body
of the Rev^d. Thomas
Cooper, A.M.,
who died the 15th
of August [?], 1746,
Aged 56 years.

The next known minister was the Rev. James Benn, who was trained by Dr. Caleb Rotherham in the academy at Kendal, which he entered about 1741. His first settlement was at Forton, probably a little before Mr. Cooper's death. He was a native of these parts, being grandson of Richard Harrison, who was the son of the Rev. Cuthbert Harrison, Nonconformist minister of Elswick. From Forton Mr. Benn went to Blackley, near Manchester, in 1757, where he remained until 1766. His next charge was Low Row in Swaledale, Yorkshire, where a chapel had been built and endowed by Philip Lord Wharton. His predecessor at Low Row was the Rev. Timothy Gardner, whose daughter he married. He died May 2nd, 1782, aged fifty-seven years. He is described as a "warm friend to civil and religious liberty."¹ From the days of Mr. Benn to the year 1782 there is some uncertainty. No records of any date in connection with the church have been preserved except an old sermon in manuscript from the text, "And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake" (Genesis viii., 21). There is no name attached to it; but on the first page, almost torn out, is the date 1757; also "Sacrament, Forton, June, 4, 1758." It appears to be a sacramental sermon, as many references to that ordinance are to be found therein. In the original trust deed of High Street Independent Chapel, Lancaster, bearing date May 5th, 1777, the Rev. Abraham Allet (Allatt), of Forton, is given as one of the first trustees. In the ordination service of the Rev. Selby Ord, of Cockermouth, Cumberland, on the 18th of June, 1767, the "Rev. Mr. Waldgrave" and the "Rev. Mr. Allott, both of Lancashire," are named as assisting in the solemnity of the day.²

¹ "History of Blackley Chapel," p. 97. "Congregationalism in Yorkshire" (Miall), p. 312.

² "History of the Congregational Chapel of Cockermouth," by Rev. W. Lewis, p. 128.

Mr. Waldegrave was minister at Tockholes, near Blackburn, and Mr. Allatt, I suspect, the Forton minister. He was trained at the Heckmondwike Academy by the Rev. James Scott, being one of his earliest students, and so would leave about 1757 or 1758. He was, therefore, in all probability Mr. Benn's immediate successor. The Rev. James Allatt, Congregational minister at Newton-le-Willows, is the great grandson of the Rev. Abraham Allatt, and his father was born in the Forton Chapel house. In the history of the Cannon Street Church, Preston, it was stated that Forton was worked along with Preston for a few years, and the Revs. John Hill and Mr. Richardson were ministers. This could only be for a short time, and the reader is referred to that article for further information. Mr. Richardson will be dealt with in the account of Garstang. The Rev. James Grimshaw was the next minister. He was trained also by the Rev. James Scott, at Heckmondwike, and settled first at South Cave, in Yorkshire, about the year 1775. His next pastorate was Tockholes, near Blackburn, where he remained until 1782, when he came to Forton. He had charge also for many years of the Independent Chapel at Garstang. In the morning he was accustomed to preach at Forton, and in the evening at Garstang. Farmers coming in their carts to morning service from Barnacre, near Garstang, used to take their minister, cushioning their heavy coach with a bottle of hay. Increasing age and infirmity led to his resignation of the charge at Garstang in the year 1828. Five or six years after this he withdrew from ministerial service, but continued to reside in the neighbourhood with a married daughter until the time of his death. This venerable man was interred in the graveyard of the Forton Chapel, and his tombstone bears the following inscription:—

Sacred
to the memory of the Revd. James
Grimshaw, of Forton, who departed
this life November 20th, 1838, in the 97th
year of his age.

Also of Jane, his wife, who died September
3rd, 1836, in the 79th year of her age.

“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.”

His successor was the Rev. John William Baynes, from Rotherham College. His ordination took place on Tuesday, December 25th, 1832, when the Rev. D. Edwards, of Elswick, delivered to him the charge from Acts xx., 28. He signs the baptismal register for the last time on December 13th, 1836. He was succeeded by the Rev. G. W. Nevatt, who signs the register in October, 1837. His ordination service took place on Tuesday, September 8, 1840, when the charge was given to the minister by the Rev. S. Bell, of Lancaster, from John xxi., 15-17. Mr. Nevatt taught a private school for some time, besides attending to his ministerial duty. His last signature in the baptismal register bears date August 25, 1847. From Forton he went to Churchtown, near Southport, and after a short time removed to St. Helens, where he remained many years without pastoral charge. He died there in 1877. Mr. Nevatt's successor at Forton was the Rev. William Major, whose first baptismal entry bears date March 5th, 1848, and last February 18, 1857. He went into Northamptonshire for a little time, and is afterwards lost sight of. The Rev. Josiah Gawthorne signs the register for the first time on the 14th of February, 1858, and for the last on October 22, 1862. His next charge was Colne, near Burnley, whence he removed to Polesworth, in Warwickshire. He remained here until his death, which took place on May 8, 1881, at the age of sixty-three years, after a twenty-four years' ministry. He was followed at Forton by the Rev. William Hackett, who signs the register first on May 3, 1863. He had previously laboured at Chipping and Inglewhite, being ordained at the latter place on November 7, 1832. He left Forton in 1866, and was for many years without charge, and connected with the church at Kirkham. He died September 1, 1882, aged eighty-four years, and was buried in the Forton Chapel graveyard, where his tombstone may be seen. The Rev. W. H. Massey was the next minister, entering upon duty here in 1867. He had been a missionary in connection with the Methodist Free Church, and had married a coloured lady in Sierra Leone. He left about 1872. The Rev. E. S. Forster next supplied the pulpit at Forton, again taking the baptismal register as our authority, from August 23, 1873, to June 28, 1874. He kept a school at the same time at Lancaster. He was formerly a deacon of the Cannon Street Church, Preston, and is now pastor of a

Congregational Church, at East Hartlepool, Durham. The Rev. William Hudson comes next, the first date in the register against which his name appears being September 26th, 1874. He remained here until 1882, and is now labouring at Kendal.¹ His successor was the Rev. T. Baron, from Walkerfold. He resigned in 1886, and is now at Mixenden, Yorkshire. The present minister—the Rev. P. Webster—who had previously laboured at Swinton, near Manchester, and Preesall, began his ministry at Forton the first Sunday in August, 1886. This little country church, though more than 180 years old, still presents many signs of vitality and power, and is thus worthily upholding the traditions of the past.

IV.—GARSTANG CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

AMONGST those interested in local ecclesiastical history there is some difference of opinion as to the date of the origin of Nonconformity in this town. It may be said to go back to the days of Isaac Ambrose, who was vicar of Preston, afterwards at Garstang, from 1655 to 1662, when he was ejected. That his influence and example would tell in the direction of Nonconformity here there can be no doubt; but that there was any separate society here in these early times we have no evidence. Elswick is only a few miles to the south, and in the little Congregational Church there such as could find no home in the Establishment would meet with a hearty welcome. The Lancashire Congregational Calendar gives the date of the formation of the church as 1777, and of the building of the chapel as 1776, and this is fairly correct. There is only one thing which points in the direction of an earlier Nonconformist interest here, which shall be named presently. In Dr. Evans's list (1717-1729) Garstang is not named, and the omission is not easily accounted for if there had been a chapel here. Nor is it mentioned in "*Notitia Cestriensis*," and though that of itself proves little, yet, taken with other things, it is something. More important still

¹ Mr. Hudson has just resigned his charge at Kendal.

is the fact that the Rev. Thomas Parkinson, curate of Garstang, in an account of the parish sent to his bishop in 1722, says: "We have not one Presbyterian conventicle in our parish."¹ Dr. Halley, too, who often has a line about the older chapels, is silent about Garstang. The Rev. G. Burder in his diary, tells about preaching here morning and afternoon on Lord's day, October 19, 1777, but he makes no mention of any chapel or minister at Garstang, and it was his custom to do this in his diary on visiting places. Further, in 1783 he mentions Garstang as one of several places into which he had been instrumental in introducing or assisting to introduce the Gospel. The one solitary fact which seems to show that at least sixty years before this time a Nonconformist minister was resident at Garstang is to be found in Peter Walkden's Diary. At the ordination of Mr. Robert Hesketh as minister at Carnforth on October 27th, 1725, there were ten ministers present, who signed the ordination certificate, and the seventh on the list is "Mr. David McMurray, Garstang."² In Fishwick's "History of Garstang" the following is all that is said about Garstang Chapel:—

"The date of the building of this chapel is unknown, but it is probably about a century old. In 1725 David McMurray was the Independent minister at Garstang."³

The two statements do not quite harmonise, and it is a wonder it did not strike Colonel Fishwick as being a little odd that the chapel should be only a century old, but a minister should have been there sixty years before. The latter statement is based upon Peter Walkden's Diary. The absence of any evidence corroborative of the early origin of this church led me to doubt the accuracy of the statement in Walkden's Diary, and I am now convinced that Mr. Dobson, the editor of the diary just mentioned, has mistaken "Garstang" for "Garsdale," in Yorkshire.⁴ The Rev. J. G. Miall says that Mr. McMurray succeeded the Rev. P. Walkden at Garsdale in 1710,⁵ and in Dr. Evans's list, already named, Mr. McMurray's

¹ Baines's "History of Lancashire" (Ed. 1870), vol. ii., 532.

² "Walkden's Diary," p. 24.

³ Chetham Society Series, Vol. civ., p. 123.

⁴ In this list he has also written the Elswick minister's name as Thomas Moss, which should be Robert Moss.

⁵ "Congregationalism in Yorkshire," p. 345.

need to come from greater distances to such services than is now necessary. It is another link in the chain of evidence that Mr. McMurray succeeded Mr. Walkden at Garsdale, and so would be no stranger to him. That Mr. Dobson, in transcribing Peter Walkden's Diary read Garstang for Garsdale is not an impossible thing. He himself told his friend, Mr. James Bromley, of Liverpool, that he suffered partial blindness for several weeks, "set up by the strain of transcribing Mr. Walkden's wonderfully minute originals."¹ The tradition, therefore, around which some of the Garstang friends cling of a 17th century origin, will have to be set aside as unworthy of belief. But, if it be proved that the Congregational Church at Garstang is not so old as some of its neighbours in this part of the county, it is not easy to say when and how it originated. Probably 1777 or 1780 is as near as we can get; and its origin may be explained in this way. If Nonconformity had no definite form of existence in 1725, there can be no doubt that many Nonconformist families lived in the neighbourhood, and these, finding it inconvenient to go to Elswick or Forton, would think of a place for themselves nearer home. In the diary of the Rev. G. Burder, of Lancaster, the entry respecting Garstang is somewhat ambiguous. He writes:—

"On Lord's Day, Oct. 19, [1777] I preached at Garstang in the morning and afternoon, and got to Lancaster, I think, in the evening. Mr. Gibbons had been the preacher there for some months."²

Whether the "there" refers to Lancaster or Garstang is not clear, but most likely Lancaster is meant. In an old almanac and diary commencing 1778 Garstang Chapel is said to be opened on the 4th of August, 1779, when Mr. Priestley preached from Matthew xxviii, 20, and Mr. Hill from Mark vii., 34. The first was doubtless the Rev. T. Priestley, then at Manchester, and brother of the celebrated Rev. Dr. J. Priestley; the second was probably the Rev. John Hill, who settled near this time at Preston, which in its early

¹ "Correspondence of the Rev. Peter Walkden," by James Bromley. P. 6 (note).

² "Memoirs of the Rev. G. Burder," p. 45.

years is said to have been worked along with Forton. The reader is referred to the accounts of those two churches for fuller information. The first known minister at Garstang was the Rev. George Richardson, probably one of Lady Huntingdon's students. In the minister's house is a small library for the use of the Garstang minister, in which are two books of interest. One, dated 1778, is the self-interpreting Bible, by John Brown, of Haddington, and is thus inscribed :—

For the use of the minister of Garstang for the time being.

Procured by Mr. Robt. Gardner,

Lancaster. £1 5s. od.

January 25th, 1787.

Geo. Richardson, Minister.

The other is Benjamin Keach's "Key to Scripture Metaphors," dated 1779. It also was procured by Mr. Gardner, at a cost of £1 10s., and is similarly inscribed to the other. When Mr. Richardson retired is not known. Probably his immediate successor was the Rev. James Grimshaw, the Forton minister, the two places being worked by him for many years. His settlement at Forton was in 1782, but the date of his assumption of the charge at Garstang is not known. In February, 1828, he resigned the pastorate of Garstang, and in a notice of that it is said that he had preached "upwards of thirty years" at Forton and Garstang.¹ He continued to labour at Forton some five or six years longer, dying there March 20th, 1838, in the ninety-seventh year of his age. There are yet living people in Garstang who remember Mr. Grimshaw, and who talk about his sayings and doings as if they were only things of yesterday, whereas it is considerably over half a century since he resigned his connection with this church. His figure stands out more prominently than that of any other minister here, and it is not too much to say that he will be known when others much less removed in point of time will have been forgotten. Some years before Mr. Grimshaw's resignation the cause at Garstang seems to have suffered, probably because increasing age and infirmity prevented the minister from doing the work he had formerly

¹ "Evangelical Magazine" or 1829, p. 501.

done. At a meeting of the Preston District on the 4th and 5th of March, 1823, the following resolution was passed:—

“Resolved, that the Rev. D. Edwards and E. Dawson, Esq., be deputed by this meeting to wait on the Rev. Mr. Grimshaw, of Garstang, with a view to devise some plan to revive the interests of religion at that place.”¹

In the following September it is reported that “instead of the Rev. D. Edwards, Mr. Eskrigg, of Lancaster, waited on the Rev. Mr. Grimshaw, of Forton. They procured the lease of the chapel, of which lease about 30 years are yet to run. The trust deed is not yet found. No doubt is at present entertained about procuring it. Messrs. Dawson and Eskrigg were respectfully requested to continue their inquiries.”² Nothing appears to have been arranged respecting Mr. Grimshaw until 1828, when on March 3rd it is stated that he had “resigned his official connection with this place on February 17th, on which occasion he preached his farewell sermon.”³ At the next meeting a letter was read stating that the congregation had increased from about eighty or ninety to 120 or 140, the Sunday school from thirty to between forty and fifty, and this increase is “attributed under the Divine blessing to the acceptable manner in which the pulpit has been supplied by the neighbouring ministers, and to the judicious advice of the Rev. George Payne.” It is further stated that “Mr. Edwards, a student in Blackburn, is about to receive an invitation to supply for one year.”⁴ Mr. Edwards began duty at Garstang, as Mr. Grimshaw’s successor, on the 1st day of January, 1829. At this time it is said “no church had as yet been formed,” the meaning of which is that it had become disorganised since its original formation. In the following May a church was formed, an account of which, together with the ordination of the minister, follows:—

“On May the 25th, 1829, a church, consisting of ten members, was formed on Congregational principles. The Rev. Messrs. Bell,

¹ “Minutes of the Preston District.”

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.* for September, 1828.

of Lancaster, D. Edwards, of Elswick, and R. Slate, of Preston, assisted on the interesting and solemn occasion. The pastors and members of sister churches present united with the newly-formed church in commemorating the death of their common Lord and Saviour. Mr. E. Edwards, late a student of Blackburn Academy, having preached at Garstang about six months, received a unanimous invitation from this newly-formed church to become their pastor, and was ordained to his office June 12th, 1829. The Rev. W. L. Alexander, M.A., Classical Tutor of Blackburn Academy, commenced the service by reading suitable portions of Scripture and engaging in prayer. The Rev. S. Bell, of Lancaster, delivered the introductory discourse. The Rev. L. Forster, of Blackburn, asked the usual questions, and received the minister's confession of faith. The Rev. D. Edwards, of Elswick, offered up the ordination prayer, which was accompanied with the imposition of hands. The Rev. R. Slate, of Preston, gave the charge to the minister from Ezek. xxxiii., 7. The Rev. D. T. Carnson, of Preston, preached to the people from Phil. ii., 29. The Rev. J. Edmonds, of St. Helens, and the Rev. J. Alexander, of Norwich, (a deputation from the London Missionary Society), conducted the other devotional parts of the service. A deep solemnity was experienced by all present, and the ordination was rendered increasingly interesting by its connection with a missionary meeting, which was held in the same place in the evening. The attendance on both occasions was very gratifying."¹

Reports respecting the condition of things at Garstang appear favourable up to 1835. I copy the following as a sample:—

"Garstang.—A letter from the pastor of the church in this place was read. It stated the preaching places to be these, viz., Garstang, Churchtown, and Barnacre. At the first there are three services on the Sabbath, and one in the week, and at the other two there is preaching every alternate week. The average attendance of hearers is from 80 to 20; members in church fellowship, 16; 70 children and six teachers in the Sunday school. Bible and catechetical classes are attended to with visible advantage, and

¹ "Evangelical Magazine" for 1829, p. 501.

religious tracts are distributed with diligence. Many families having removed from the place on account of the stoppage of a manufacturing establishment, the congregations have decreased. A letter from the church was read, thanking the Union for its past liberality, and soliciting the same grant as last year."¹

The grant was made, which was £35. In 1835 Mr. Edwards retired from Garstang and settled at Hyde, near Manchester, where he remained until April, 1841. Then he removed to Hatherlow, to be co-pastor with the Rev. Thomas Bennett for a short time. He afterwards taught a school in Manchester, and died there on the 20th of December, 1868, aged sixty-three years. He was interred in the burial ground connected with the Hanover Chapel, Stockport. His wife was Miss Eliza Bond, of Chipping.

After the removal of Mr. Edwards the place was supplied for some time by students from Blackburn. Another extract from the minutes of March, 1836, will show the condition of things in the church at the time :—

“Report from Garstang read, which stated that there were three public services on the Sabbath, the congregations averaging 50 or 60 in the forenoon, 60 in the afternoon, and 30 in the evening ; that there were 14 church members, one having removed during the year ; that they held two prayer meetings weekly, which were attended by from 14 to 20 persons ; that there were about 40 Sabbath scholars, with six teachers ; and that the seat rents had amounted to £21. A letter from Mr. Wm. Bell, on behalf of the church, was also read, which stated that their religious spirit had not been destroyed, but rather invigorated by their privations and difficulties ; that their prayer meetings were better attended, whilst more ardent devotion was manifested by those who engaged in the services ; that they hoped the worst was passed, and were cheered and supported by their auspicious prospects.”

In the extract just given occurs the name of Dr. William Bell, to whom Garstang Congregationalism is greatly indebted. Year by year he appeared at the County Union meetings to look after the

¹ “Minutes of the Preston District” for March, 1831.

interests of the little church he was sent to represent. For one while he gave up part of his house to Mr. Edwards, the minister. During Mr. Craig's ministry he and some others painted the chapel throughout. He lies in the quiet graveyard of the chapel which had so warm a place in his heart, a handsome tombstone marking the spot. Behind the pulpit in the chapel also is a beautiful marble tablet, the inscription upon which reads thus:—

In Memoriam

WILLIAM BELL, M.D.,

Born at Glasgow, 1789; died at Garstang, 1870.

For forty years he was a zealous member and faithful office bearer of this church. Skilful in his profession, wide in culture, and fearless in politics. The *shining* virtues of his character were Honesty, Simplicity, and Unselfishness, crowned with a reverent spirit. "And thus he bore without abuse the grand old name of gentleman."

His daughter is the wife of the Rev. Thomas Hamer, Congregational minister at Little Lever, near Bolton, and his son was the late Dr. Bell, of Winckley Square, Preston. A Mr. Birch, who had previously been at Kirkby Lonsdale is mentioned as having supplied for about three months in 1838. In February, 1839, the Rev. W. T. Craig came to Garstang as minister. He was the son of the Rev. T. Craig, for some time minister at Wymondhouses and Walkerfold, and brother to the Rev. T. Craig, for many years pastor of the Congregational Church at Bocking, in Essex. In 1831 he was a member of the Chapel Street Church, Blackburn, and began preaching in that year at Belthorn, near Darwen. He was ordained as pastor there in 1832, when the Rev. Joseph Hague, of Ebenezer Chapel, Darwen, gave the charge. From Belthorn he removed to Garstang. In February, 1841, Mr. Craig was able to give the following encouraging report to the Union:—

"Letter from Mr. Craig read, stating that the past year had been a memorable period in the history of the church at Garstang by the outpouring of the spirit of the Lord, that special meetings had been held with those under serious impressions for prayer and conversation, that 17 had been added to the church, and that several others were asking the way to Zion; also that preaching had been

discontinued at Barnacre for want of suitable accommodation ; that Winmarley was increasing and that a new station had been occupied at Catterall."¹

It deserves to be recorded that during his ministry a Temperance Society was formed, which was productive of much good, many through it being led to attend upon the preaching of the Gospel who had not been "in a place of worship for many years."² In March, 1846, Mr. Craig resigned his charge at Garstang, and subsequently laboured for several years at Hindley, near Wigan. The Rev. John Spencer entered upon duty as Mr. Craig's successor September 26th, 1847. He was trained at Newport Pagnel, entered the ministry in 1838, and had previously laboured at Hambledon, in Bucks. At the District Meeting held in February, 1853, Mr. Spencer stated that on account of removals from "the church and congregation to other localities, and death of others he had resolved to remove from Garstang as soon as a sphere of labour presented itself." His resignation took place in the early part of 1854, but he continued to reside in the neighbourhood for a short time, and occasionally supplied the Garstang pulpit. He was afterwards minister at Kirkby Lonsdale and Inglewhite, and now resides at Barrow-in-Furness without pastoral charge. At the District Meetings held at Lancaster, February, 1858, the delegate from Garstang reported that the "condition of this station was still disheartening, and that ground was rather lost than gained." At this time the place was merely supplied. At the District Meeting of February, 1866, a new station was formed, called "The Fylde Evangelistic Station." B. Whitworth, Esq., promised £50 per annum on condition the Union voted another £50. The centre of operations was to be Fleetwood. At this meeting a request was brought from the Garstang Church to be allowed to be "included in the Fylde itinerancy." This request was granted, and the Rev. E. Rose, stationed at Poulton, as Evangelist for this purpose in 1867 and 1868, was a frequent supply at Garstang. In the latter year the Rev. Mr. Mercer, B.A., began to preach to the people, though what was his exact relationship I know not.

¹ "Minutes of the Preston District."

² "County Union Report," dated April, 1843.

He was here only a short time, and afterwards kept a school at Ilkley. No further settlement was effected until October, 1875, when the Rev. J. Schofield, who had previously laboured at Adlington, near Chorley, became pastor. He remained only until 1879, preaching his farewell sermon on Sunday morning, November 9th. During his ministry, in 1877, at a cost of over £700, two houses were erected as a manse for the minister, the land for which was given by Mr. Bashall. Mr. Schofield lived in retirement at Lytham after leaving Garstang, and died suddenly, about three or four years ago, during a visit to his brother at Oldham. His successor was the Rev. J. Cockram, from Tyldesley, who began his ministry here on the first Sunday in September, 1880. He resigned in September, 1882, and for several years resided in the town without charge. He has recently settled over the new interest at Little Asby, in Westmorland. The church remained without a pastor until November, 1888, when the present minister, the Rev. W. J. Burman entered upon duty here. Mr. Burman was trained at Cheshunt, entered the ministry in 1864, and has laboured at Bristol, and West Cowes, Isle of Wight.

The chapel stands about sixty yards up a lane, leading out of the main road from Preston to Lancaster. It is about 100 yards from the quaint little town which gives to it its name, and is quite alone. A patent padlock, which requires much patience and careful manipulation, keeps the little iron gate closed against all intruders. A porch faces the road, which is quite a modern addition, on the left of which is the "way in." A sort of vestibule is formed by a wooden screen, which runs nearly the whole width of the chapel. This will be found, near the floor, to be blistered and scorched terribly, and the explanation is that a vigorous heating apparatus is immediately beneath. Nobody, however, complains, for the Garstang friends like warmth of more kinds than one. Two aisles run down the wall sides, and between are the pews—like parallels of latitude—eight in number, open at both ends, and divided irregularly by small pieces of board. The pulpit, or rather platform is in front, to the right of which is the miniature singing pew, and to the left a large square pew—the only relic left within of the past, and it is set apart for the minister. Its appearance suggests that he at least is expected to be a family man. On this side is a

door leading into a room behind, which serves both as vestry and Sunday School—and above that again is another room, of exactly the same size, used now for storage purposes. In the lower room is a curious green painted three-legged chair, which has seen a few decades. The story is that it was used by an exceedingly stout man, weighing not less than twenty-six stone, who sat in the gallery, where a seat was cut away, and the chair fixed. Over the doorway is the little gallery. There are three windows on each side of the chapel, and two in front, so that it is well lighted. The roof is open—unceiled—and so the building has a somewhat barn-like appearance inside. The walls are the original ones, and they are all that is left of the old building. As already stated, there was formerly no porch—one aisle went down the centre of the chapel up to the large communion pew, where sat the singers with their table and music stand. The old pulpit, which was a considerable height, stood where the present platform is, and galleries went round the chapel. Dr. Mellor, preaching at the re-opening of the chapel in 1868, said he remembered preaching there as a student when he could shake hands with everybody in the gallery. Many years ago, through the expiration of the lease, the chapel became the property of the Keppel family, and was rented from them at £5 yearly. "In 1867," says Atticus, "the congregation purchased the building for £100, and spent £350 in altering and improving it." Mrs. Hamer, the late Dr. Bell's sister, was a prime mover in the matter. It was then that the old pews were taken away and the porch was added. The chapel was re-opened on Easter Monday, 1868, Dr. Mellor being the preacher. Since the foregoing was written it has again been beautified and somewhat renovated. The exterior walls of the building and the boundary walls have been pointed with cement. The last of the old-fashioned square pews has been removed, and open benches substituted. The platform has been remodelled, and a new door constructed to the vestry. In the gallery the pews have been altered and made more comfortable; and a new floor has been laid down in the schoolroom. The ventilation has also been greatly improved. The roof of the chapel has been coloured in a pleasing shade of pale blue and cream, and the roof timbers cleaned. The wall behind the platform

¹ "Our Country Churches and Chapels," p. 482.

has been more elaborately treated with ribbon scrolls, and rose and ashlar diaper patterns. In the centre of the wall there are three circular-headed panels, the middle one containing a conventionalised treatment of the wheat and the vine. The pews have been stained a dark brown oak and varnished. The exterior of the chapel has also been painted. The re-opening services took place on Wednesday, April 30th of this year, when the Rev. John Yonge, of Warrington, preached in the afternoon. In the evening a tea meeting was held, presided over by E. B. Dawson, Esq., of Lancaster. It was stated at this meeting that the cost of the alterations, &c., would be about £130, towards which £100 had been received, and the remainder was expected from the opening services. The chapel has sitting accommodation for about 180 people, and the congregation generally reaches about half that number. Service is held morning and evening in summer, and in winter, morning and afternoon. Around the chapel there is a good-sized graveyard, enlarged in 1872 at a cost of £80. It is quite full of graves being for many years the only place of interment for Dissenters for many miles around. It contains several monuments, beautiful and costly. Amongst the families which have for many years been associated with Nonconformity here may be mentioned the Bells, Cartmells, and Smiths, of Garstang; the Clarkes, of Pilling; the Armstrongs and Boltons, from Kirkland; the Gardners, Dobsons, Tophams, Bees, Standings, Brewers, and Helms, of Barnacre. Soon after Mr. Grimshaw's resignation of the pastorate, strife sprang up and a division took place. He preached Calvinism "high and dry," but his successor did not—at any rate not as he did. Consequently several of the members seceded, a man named Johnny Shaw, farmer, of Nateby, being a prime mover, and founded there the Particular Baptist interest. From that time the fortunes of the Garstang congregation seemed to go down, and often has the outlook been most discouraging. It is, however, pleasing to know that through the wise and helpful ministry of Mr. Burman things are looking up again. The congregations are growing gradually; the membership is about 20; and the number of scholars is over 30, whereas on his coming here there were only some eleven or twelve.

V.—GALGATE, CATON, AND DOLPHINHOLME.

THE two first-named villages, though distant from each other about nine miles, were formerly worked as one station in connection with the Lancashire Congregational Union. Lancaster lies almost midway between, and it was the Congregational Church here which introduced the gospel into these villages. It ought, however, to be mentioned that half a century before, the Congregationalists held services here. The Rev. Wm. Alexander, at that time a member of the High Street Congregational Church, Lancaster, preached his first sermon at Galgate about the end of 1797, a performance which he says "by no means pleased me."¹ In different houses he continued to hold services after that time for some weeks. In the summer of the year following he began preaching at Caton. "The proprietors of a spinning mill in the village," says his biographer, "kindly granted the use of a large room which held about two hundred people, and in which he preached every Sunday evening, for some time afterwards. His ministry there was very successful. Several of the people began to attend High Street Chapel on the Sunday morning, and some of the young persons became members of Mr. Charrier's church."² These services were probably discontinued, or at most only held occasionally after Mr. Alexander's removal to Prescott in 1802. About 1842 work in these places appears to have been resumed by the High Street Church. They are mentioned together, and for the first time in the minutes of the Preston District Meeting for February, 1846, when it was resolved to ask the General Committee of the county for a grant of £20 for preaching at the places. The Rev. J. Fleming, then minister at High Street, thus writes at that date :—

"In Caton there are 2,000 inhabitants, and in Galgate and its immediate vicinity 1,000; a spirit of hearing and deep concern in reference to spiritual matters has been excited in both places; that the people are very desirous to have settled among them a Home Missionary. They will raise among themselves about

¹ "Memoirs of the Rev. Wm. Alexander," by the Rev. John Alexander, p. 40.

² *Ibid.*, p. 42

£20, and the friends at Lancaster will liberally assist them if the desired grant can be obtained.”¹

The grant was obtained, and work under these new conditions was commenced in the summer of 1846. Mr. George Reid, who was then a member of the High Street Church, was appointed missionary. After nine months' work Mr. Reid reported that “considerable congregations” had been collected, and that “a considerable impression” had been produced in both villages, and “the prospects of still greater good” were very encouraging.² He continued to labour usefully at this station until 1849, when failing health led to his retirement. He removed to Barrow-in-Furness, where he followed the business of a grocer, dying there a few years ago. Supplies were then provided by the High Street Church until April 7th, 1850, when the Union Report states that another missionary had been appointed, and on that day commenced his labours. His stay, however, was short, and the High Street Church again supplied the two places; so that they ceased to have Union help. In February, 1856, the Rev. John Sugden, B.A., minister of that Church, gave the following interesting particulars to the Preston District Meeting :—

“Caton had 25 church members; an adult congregation of 48; Sunday school, 100. Four new members had been added. Galgate had 12 members, a congregation of 160, and a Sunday school of 160 children. One new member had been received. There had been some revival at Caton, and several were candidates for communion at both places.”³

Since the days of Mr. Reid, Caton has been worked as a mission station by the High Street Church, and is so still. The chapel in which worship is held was some years ago converted into its present form out of an old silk warehouse, and will accommodate some 200 persons. Galgate, however, again came upon the Union funds in 1860 as a separate station, and received a grant of £20. In February of the year following it was stated that the church had

¹ “Minutes of the Preston District.”

² “County Union Report” for 1846.

³ “Minutes of the Preston District.”

nine members, Sunday morning congregation numbered 60 adults and 50 scholars, evening 100 adults and 30 scholars, that there was chapel accommodation for 200 adults and 100 scholars.¹ The Rev. J. Gawthorne, the Forton minister, supplied the pulpit on the Sunday evening, and in the week time ; and Mr. D. Mc.Kinlay and other lay preachers from Lancaster took the Sunday morning service. In the Report for 1862 it is said that the want of progress during the year is to be accounted for in part from "an active, wily, clerical counter-working, and in part from Wesleyan energy, that body having opened a new chapel there recently." The Rev. William Hackett succeeded Mr. Gawthorne at Forton, and the same arrangements for preaching at Galgate were continued. In 1864, it is said, "arrangements had been made to secure the services of Mr. Thomas Hamer, of Scorton, who is engaged in studies preparatory to his entrance on college life."² Mr. Hamer is now the respected minister of the Congregational Church at Little Lever, near Bolton. The Lancashire Congregational Calendar for 1867-8 has the following respecting Galgate :—

"Very little that is satisfactory can be reported of this station. Its efficiency has been further impaired during the past year by the constitution of a Baptist Church at Lancaster, which has affected both the school and congregation. The Executive, during the year, felt it right to discontinue all action at Galgate, under the conviction that it was in other ways supplied with Evangelical teaching."

This, then, was virtually the end of over twenty years' effort, and it does seem to be matter for regret that, as a denomination, our hold should be lost upon villages where for years we have been almost without a rival. For two or three years after this Galgate appears in "The Congregational Year Book" among the list of places supplied, after which it drops out of sight. The building which had been used for worship is still in existence, and has upon its front a tablet thus inscribed :—

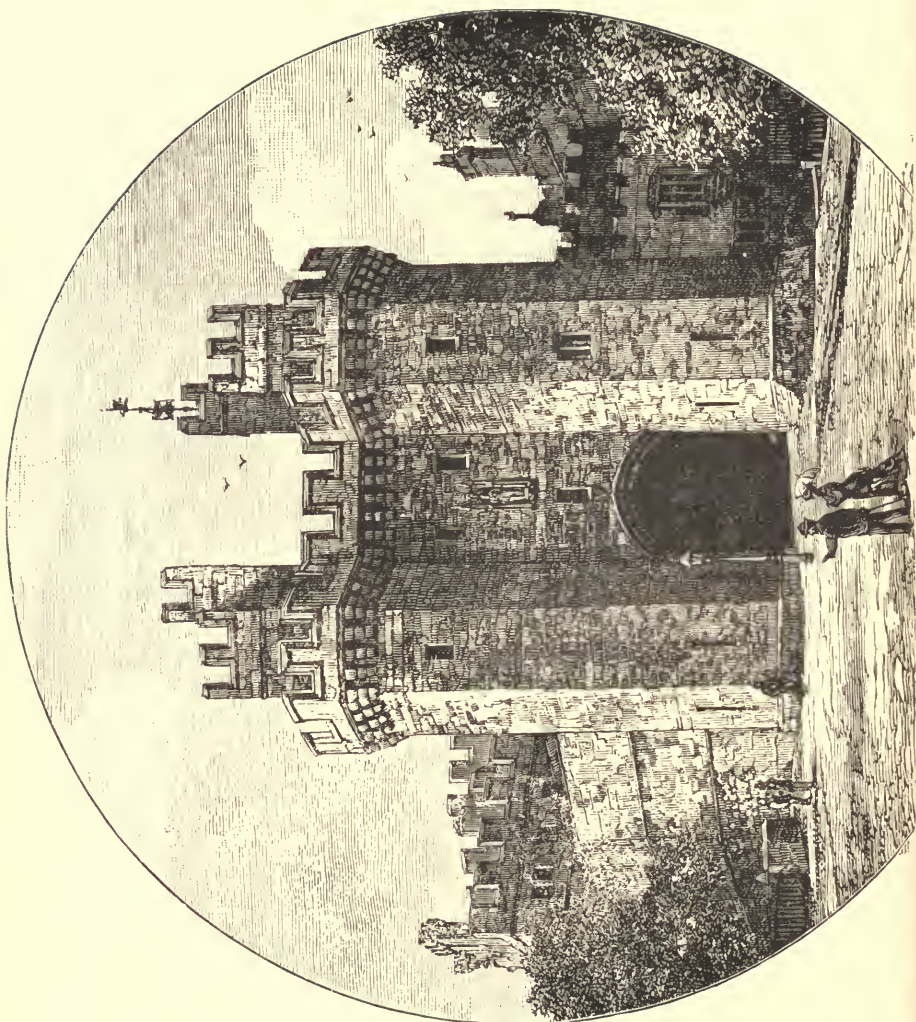
ERECTED BY JOHN ARMSTRONG,
1844.

¹ "Minutes of the Preston District," February, 1861.

² *Ibid*, for 1864.

He was of the Unitarian faith, and owner of the silk mill in the village. The second floor of the building was occupied by the Congregationalists, and the first by the Wesleyans, until they erected their chapel, as mentioned in one of the preceding Union extracts. It still belongs to the mill-owners; the large schoolroom being used for public meetings, tea parties, concerts, &c., in the week time, and on Sunday evenings the Baptists hold a service there, the attendance upon which is sometimes not more than eight or ten.

Dolphinholme is another little village preaching place, some three or four miles south-west of Galgate. Services were commenced here on the 14th of February, 1875, by the Rev. William Hudson, then at Forton, in a small room, capable of holding about fifty people. Eventually this was enlarged to give sitting accommodation for over 100. An iron chapel was purchased, and opened on Easter Monday, 1881, by the Rev. H. W. Smith, then at Fleetwood, now at Lancaster. After Mr. Hudson's retirement from the pastorate at Forton, in 1882, he continued to supply Dolphinholme until March, 1885, when he removed to Kendal. In that year it became a County Union station, to be worked along with the church at Forton. There is no separate church here, the members being in fellowship with the Forton church, whose minister, the Rev. P. Webster, preaches there every Sunday evening. The chapel will seat about 200, and, according to the last returns in the Calendar, there is a congregation of 100, a membership of 16, and the grant from the Union funds is £20.



LANCASTER CASTLE.

CHAPTER IV.

IN AND AROUND LANCASTER.



I.—THE UNITARIAN CHAPEL.

THIS most important North Lancashire town has not yet had its story told by a historian worthy of the name, and yet there is no town in the county which offers a more inviting field. Whether we think of its age, which led one of our greatest poets to sing of it as “time honoured Lancaster;” of the different peoples who here have lived—Celtic, Roman, Saxon, Danish, and Norman; of the successive struggles through which it has passed; of its antique buildings, first and foremost among which is the old Norman keep, which once awed into subjection our Saxon forefathers, and still serves to hold in “durance vile” the lawbreaker; whether we consider the immense store of legendary lore which clusters around here, or the rich scenery in its immediate neighbourhood, Lancaster presents to the antiquarian and historian all that can be desired to excite interest and awaken enthusiasm. Into this inviting field, however, we may not enter except to sketch the rise and progress of Nonconformity in the town.

In Calamy’s memorials of the ministers ejected in 1662, under the heading of Lancaster, appears the following :—

“DR. WILLIAM MARSHALL: After his ejectment he travelled abroad, and then settled at London, where he practised physic.”¹

Nonconformity did not, however, originate in Lancaster with Dr. Marshall. The saintly George Marsh, a native of Deane, near Bolton, martyred on April 24th, 1555, at West Chester, by Mary, the zealous Popish Queen of England, was a frequent occupant of

¹ “Nonconformist’s Memorial” (1802). Vol. ii., p. 367



Barlow sculp London

A REPRESENTATION OF THE
BURNING of GEORGE MARSH,
At West-chester. April 24th 1555.

the castle here. Baines says that the townspeople were accustomed to gather "under the walls of the Castle to listen to the prayers of George Marsh and his fellow-prisoner Warburton," and that from this time there was a "strong Puritan element in Lancaster." Mr. Marsh himself thus writes :—

"They threatened and rebuked me, for my preaching to the people out of the prison, as they called it, and for my praying and reading so loud, that the people in the streets might hear. The truth is, I and my fellow prisoner Warbarton, every day kneeling on our knees, did read morning and evening prayer, with the English Litany every day twice, both before noon and after, with other prayers more, and also read every day certain chapters of the Bible, commonly towards night; and we read all these things with so high and loud a voice that the people without in the streets might hear us read, and sat under our windows, wherewith others being offended, complained."²

All this had its influence upon the town, and prepared the way for the Nonconformity of later days. Moreover, the pulpit of the old Parish Church had a Nonconformist occupant in 1645. This was the Rev. Nehemiah Barnet, who preached a sermon—"God's lift up Hand for Lancashire"—before the Honourable Committee of the County of Lancaster, upon the 18th of December, 1645. This is said to be a "Solemne Day of Thanksgiving to God for clearing of the County and in subduing the enemies thereof." In the list of Classical Presbyteries into which Lancashire was divided, dated October 2nd, 1646, his name appears, and as the Lancaster minister. He was followed by Dr. Marshall, already named. In the Parliamentary Survey of 1650 is the following notice of him :—

"Y^e Viccar for y^e Tyme being att Lancaster aforesaid is M^r. William Marshall, M^r. of Arts, a godly and painfull Minister (of Jesus Christ)."³

¹ "History of Lancashire" (Ed. 1870). Vol. ii., p. 572

² "Life and Martyrdom of George Marshe," &c. Printed at Bolton by Jackson in 1787. p. 239.

³ "Commonwealth Survey" (Record Society, Vol. i.), p. 126.

George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, was a frequent visitor to Lancaster, and several times was imprisoned in the Castle. Between him and the Presbyterians there appears to have been no great affection, and in not very complimentary terms he refers to the "Priest of Lancaster," who was the Dr. Marshall just named, the "Godly and painfull Minister of Jesus Christ."

In 1652 George Fox thus writes :—

"Being come to Lancaster, and justice Sawrey and justice Thompson having granted a warrant to apprehend me, though I was not apprehended by it, yet hearing of it I appeared at the sessions; where there appeared against me about forty priests. These had chosen one Marshal, a priest of Lancaster, to be their orator; and had provided one young priest and two priests sons to bear witness against me who had sworn before hand that I had spoken blasphemy. When the judges were set, they heard all that the priests and their witnesses could say and charge against me; their orator Marshal sitting by and explaining their sayings for them; but the witnesses were so confounded, that they discovered themselves to be false witnesses. . . . Colonel West, who being a justice of the peace, was then upon the bench; and having long been weak in body, blessed the Lord, and said The Lord had healed him that day; adding, That he never saw so many sober people and good faces together in all his life. Then turning himself to me, he said in the open sessions, 'George, if thou hast anything to say to the people, thou mayest freely declare it.' I was moved of the Lord to speak; and as soon as I began, priest Marshal, the orator for the rest of the priests, went his way."

As intimated above, Dr. Marshall was ejected from the Parish Church in 1662, and eventually he settled in London. In the graveyard of the St. Nicholas Street Chapel, Lancaster, is a tombstone belonging to the Marshall family, connected, I imagine, in some way with this early Nonconformist worthy. The following is the inscription thereon :—

¹ "Fox's Journal" (Third Edition, 1765), pp. 81, 82.

WILLIAM MARSHALL
'caused this stone to be laid
over the Remains of 'his
beloved wife ESTHER, who
died May 17th, 1737, aged 61 years.

WILLIAM MARSHALL departed
this life December 23rd,
1767, in the 90th
year of his age.

When and where the Nonconformists first erected their house of worship cannot be ascertained. Baines's account of the matter is as follows :—

“The next dissenting place of worship built in Lancaster was that of the Presbyterians. . . . As soon as the indulgences of James II. rendered it possible, we find a Presbyterian congregation publicly organised. William Stout, in his *Autobiography*, mentions that on John Greenwood being elected mayor of Lancaster, ‘the mace was carried before him, with inferior officers attending him, to the Presbyterian place of worship.’ John Greenwood was Mayor 1687-8. This meeting-house, we find by the same journal, was founded by the Greenwoods, for speaking of Augustine Greenwood, son of the mayor, Stout says : ‘He was of the Presbyterian religious persuasion, and the principal one of that profession here. He provided them a meeting-house here while he lived ;’ and after his death (which was in 1701) his widow ‘also granted the meeting-house freely without rent.’ She lived until 1725. That this meeting-house was the one in St. Nicholas Street, in which, in the middle of last century, the congregation were worshipping is not absolutely ascertained, but in all probability it was so, as, by 1784, we find the latter already so decayed as to require rebuilding, and the present chapel was accordingly built in 1786. Its congregation gradually became Unitarian during the last century.”¹

The Rev. John Sugden, B.A., in a short History of Lancaster Nonconformity, says :—

¹ “History of Lancashire” (Ed. 1870). Vol. ii. p. 572.

"I am not able to learn the exact date of the original Nonconformist erection in Lancaster. . . . The original building was, as I am informed on excellent authority, situate in Moor Lane, on the site now occupied by the buildings, in front of St. Ann's Episcopal Chapel."¹

This, wherever situate, was not large, for according to Dr. Eyan's list, there were only 260 hearers. The first known minister was the Rev. Robert Chaderton. He was born in the neighbourhood of Middleton, Lancashire, and was trained in part at Brasenose College. His conversion was brought about through hearing the Rev. Oliver Heywood preach, and he became chaplain to the family of Mr. Serjeant, of Stand, near Manchester. At this place he married the daughter of William Walker, and here he was ordained May 12th, 1687, by Oliver Heywood, Henry Pendlebury, and Robert Eaton. In July following he settled at Lancaster, but about a month after he became seriously ill, and was brought to the old hall at Stand, where his wife was. At this place he died, and was buried at Prestwich Church, October 15th, 1687. He is said to have been "violently persecuted by the spiritual court, excommunicated, imprisoned at Lancaster," and "when he got his liberty he still went on preaching abundantly,"² In the Northowram Register is the following entry:—

"Mr. Robt. Chadderton, a choice minr. in Lanc., buried at Prestwick, Oct. 15 [1687]."³

The Rev. John Carrington was probably Mr. Chaderton's immediate successor, though the precise date of his settlement is not known. He was born in Cheshire, educated by Mr. Frankland, whose Academy at Rathmell he entered March 27th, 1680. He was ordained at Alverthorpe on the 4th of September, 1689, by Messrs. O. Heywood, Nailor, Dawson, and others, being at the time settled at Lancaster. He appears to have been a most gifted man, and at his ordination he astonished everybody by his learning.

¹ "The Church Guide: for the Church and Congregation assembling in High Street Congregational Chapel, Lancaster." 1861. p. 38.

² "Hunter's Life of Heywood," pp. 351, 352.

³ P. 72.

A curious case of demoniacal possession in one Richard Dugdale, who lived at Surey, near Whalley, brought together several of the Nonconformist ministers of the district for fasting and prayer, with a view to the unfortunate man's deliverance. Amongst the ministers who took part in these meetings were Thomas Jollie, Chas. Sagar, Robert Waddington, Oliver Heywood, Richard Frankland, and John Carrington. Mr. Carrington received a letter from Mr. Waddington, who acted as convener, summoning him to one of these meetings, bearing date September 16, 1689, not quite a fortnight after his ordination. The writer says :—

“The country is very desirous of, your assistance, and *vox Populi vox Dei*. Mr. H. and his consort, who have a very Commodious House, are very free to be serviceable to you with any accommodation for Lodging there. I pray you, good Sir, forecast, if possible, for the next opportunity, and pay long interest for your last disappointing so many expectations by a longer continuance when you come. The Devil threatens [referring to the demoniac] That *He will grease your Boots and your Spurs, too, when you come. Praemonitus, premunitus* ; I have heard him speak Latin ; and he declares he Knows nothing about Latin.”¹

With Mr. Jollie, of Wymondhouses, he appears to have been very intimate, and in the Wymondhouses Church Book there are several references to him. In the Northowram Register is the following notice of his death :—

“Mr. John Carrington, preacher, at Lancaster, N. C. [Nonconformist], dyed Mch., 1700-1, aged 4— [48 years].”²

The Rev. James Grimshaw was his successor. He was educated at Rathmell, entering the Academy there on the 23rd of August, 1695, and was ordained at Macclesfield, along with several others on the 17th of June, 1700. In the following year he entered upon his labours at Lancaster. In 1705 he married Hannah, daughter of Henry Finch, the ejected minister of Walton, and continued to labour at Lancaster until 1724, when an affection of the mind led

¹ “History of Tockholes Chapel,” p. 80.

² P. 104. Hunter says he was only forty.

to his resignation.¹ There is in existence a sermon which he preached at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, which bears the following title:—"Rest from Rebels, or the Blessing and Duty of Churches; Consider'd in a Sermon, most of which was preach'd at a Provincial Assembly of Ministers, held at Manchester, May the 8, 1716. By JAMES GRIMSHAW, Minister of the Gospel in Lancaster. London: Printed in the year 1716." The text was Acts ix., 31.

In the Northowram Register, under date March, 1728, is the following notice of his death:—

"Mr. James Grimshaw, died in Manchester, had been minr. in Lancaster, but of late discompos'd in mind, and unfitt for his Work."²

Mr. Grimshaw's successor was the Rev. John Bent, a native of Warrington, and educated for the ministry by the Rev. Thomas Hill, at Findern, Derbyshire. He began his ministry at Lancaster in 1724. In 1732 he removed to Chorley, where he remained until his death in 1765. In Walkden's Diary it is said that at Mr. Hesketh's ordination, on the 27th of October, 1725, "there was present one candidate, Mr. Bent, Lancaster."³ Mr. Bent was followed by the Rev. James Daye. He was born in 1700, was trained by Dr. Caleb Rotheram, at Kendal, and began his ministry at Lancaster in 1736. He retained his office until his death. Between his tutor and himself there existed the closest friendship, and he was chosen to preach the doctor's funeral sermon in 1752. Another sermon of his is still in existence, which was delivered before the Lancashire ministers at Manchester, May 8th, 1744. The title is, "St. Paul's preaching Christ designed to promote the knowledge and practice of religion," his text being Col. i., 28.

A large monumental stone, upon which time is beginning to tell, stands erect against the left wall of the graveyard on entering the chapel, in the centre of which is a brass plate, protected by glass, thus inscribed:—

Here lies interred
the Reverend James Daye,

¹ "Christian Reformer" for 1858, p. 530.

² P. 300.

³ P. 24.

who ministered about 34 years
to the Society at this Chapel,
with fidelity and acceptance,
for he discharged the duties of his
pastoral office with the
united aids of genius, piety,
and learning, enforcing instruction
by the exemplary virtues of his
life. Well instructed
himself in the several
branches of science, he was
assiduous and successful
in his endeavours to
improve the minds of youth.
He was an affectionate
relation, and a warm and
steady friend. His
sentiments in religion
were liberal and generous;
his benevolence universal,
and truly Christian; and
his integrity without reproach.
Having lived esteemed, he died
lamented by all that knew
him, July 9th, 1770,
aged 70 years.

Near this place are also
interred Sarah and Ebenezer,
the offspring of James
and Sarah Daye. Here also
lies interred Sarah Daye,
second wife of James Daye.

These Dearer lov'd as smiling Days returned,
Through sorrowing years are still more deeply mourned.

In the same part of the graveyard is another interesting tombstone, the inscription on which here follows:—

Elizabeth Daye
Caused this stone to be
Placed over her respected
Grandmother, Elizabeth
Roscoe, who departed
this Life Nov. 26th, 1746,
aged 73.

Here also lie the remains
of Elizabeth Daye,
who died January 23rd,
1829, in the 96th
year of her age.

Following Mr. Daye, comes the Rev. Benjamin Harrison, his first entry in the baptismal register bearing date January 13, 1771. His tombstone is in the chapel-yard, upon which appears the following :—

The Rev. Benjamin
Harrison is here interred,
who died 12th of May,
1781, aged 67 years.

The Rev. John Harrison, trained at the Warrington Academy, followed, his name first appearing in the register under date October 3rd, 1781. A pamphlet with the following title was the production of his pen :—

“Specimens of the manner in which Public Worship is conducted in Dissenting Congregations ; with a Service for Baptism, the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, and the Burial of the Dead. By J. H. ‘This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, he heareth us.’—1 John v., 14. Preston : Printed and sold by Thomas Walker, MDCCXCIII.”

The preface is signed “H. Lancaster, Jan. 1st, 1793.” His last entry in the register is dated May 22, 1796. He removed to Kendal, where he died May 6, 1833.

The Rev. Samuel Girle, whose ministerial training was obtained at Daventry, and who had previously laboured at North Shields, settled at Lancaster on the 17th of July, 1796. His last entry in the register is dated August 7, 1803. He afterwards resided in London, and took occasional supplies.

The Rev. Peter Samuel Charrier, minister of High Street Congregational Church, Lancaster, from 1790 to 1809, gives some curious particulars utilised by Dr. Halley respecting the state of affairs at St. Nicholas Street in his day. I cite from Dr. Halley as follows :—

"The growth of the Independent congregation during the ministry of Mr. Charrier in Lancaster, in so far as it was consequent upon the decline of the presbyterian interest, may to some extent be attributed to the strange conduct of the Arian minister of that town, who although a very attractive preacher when he was in good humour, was almost incessantly quarrelling with his people. On occasion of the death of a lady of his congregation connected with several of the principal families of the town, he observed a large audience expecting to hear her funeral sermon. After announcing his text, he said 'I perceive an unusually large audience. You are come no doubt to hear the character of Mrs. — ; but you will all be disappointed, for be it known to all of you that I and my people are at open war. I see or know nothing of them except as they appear on Sundays in the corners of their pews. As the deceased was a constant attendant here, let us hope she has gone to a better world.' In order to express his disapproval of the illiberality of his people in contributing inadequately to his support, he would frequently lay aside on Sunday evening the clothes in which he had preached, and walk through the principal streets of the town dressed in a ragged coat, patched breeches, old shoes, and dirty linen, taking care, as he had opportunity, to tell those who accosted him, that he was dressed in a style befitting the contributions for his support."¹

The Rev. William Lamport succeeded Mr. Girle. He was educated at Daventry, ordained at Poole in 1796, and began work at Lancaster on July 12th, 1804. He resigned in 1829, and at the time of his death—July 14th, 1848, at the age of seventy-five years—was resident in Manchester, without pastoral charge. In the chapel at Lancaster is a mural tablet from which the foregoing particulars have been gleaned, and which states that it "is consecrated to the memory of the Reverend William Lamport by the congregation assembling in this chapel in testimony of the fidelity with which he combined the duties of a pastor in a ministry of twenty-five years with the labours of an instructor of youth, in both of which offices he is remembered with esteem and affection." The

¹ "Lancashire Puritanism and Nonconformity." Vol. ii., p. 446 (note).

Rev. George Lee comes next. He was trained at the Manchester College, York, was minister at Boston from 1826 to 1829, and at Lancaster from 1829 to 1835. He was afterwards editor of the *Kendal Mercury*, and died in 1862. The Rev. Henry Alexander follows. The date of his birth is 1810, and his place of education Belfast. He settled at Lancaster December 7th, 1835. He had left Lancaster before the autumn of 1840, being then at Newry. He died in 1868. The Rev. Hamilton Hunter came to be minister at Lancaster on the 10th of September, 1840, and left on September 6th, 1841. He was followed by the Rev. Richard Shaen, M.A., who received his training at Manchester College, York. He was minister at Lancaster from 1842 to May, 1845; Edinburgh, 1845-50; Dudley, 1852-55, and afterwards at Royston, in Hertfordshire. His successor was the Rev. Henry Herford, B.A., also from the Manchester New College. He began his ministry here in October, 1845, and in the following year went upon the Continent. To him succeeded the Rev. John H. Hope, in November, 1846. He was the brother of George Hope, of Fenton Barns. He terminated his ministry here in December, 1847. In 1848 Mr. Herford returned to his old charge and remained this time until June, 1854. He was afterwards the minister for a time at Brook Street, Manchester, and went into retirement in 1870. The Rev. David Davis, B.A., of Manchester New College, became co-pastor with Mr. Herford, in 1850, and remained with him as such for about four years. He had been minister at Whitby from 1843 to 1845, and Stockport 1845-48. After leaving Lancaster he became pastor of Dr. Taylor's old church at Norwich from 1854 to 1861, leaving for Lancaster again, where until recently he kept a school of considerable importance. He is now resident without charge at Evesham, in Essex, his native place. The co-pastorate at Lancaster was filled up in 1853 by the Rev. Goodwyn Barmby. He was trained at Woodbridge and Yarmouth Grammar Schools, entered the ministry in 1848, laboured at Topsham and Lyneston, in Devon, and came to Lancaster about the end of 1853, but was not properly appointed to the vacant co-pastorate until 1854. He left in April, 1858, and became minister of the Wakefield Unitarian Chapel, resigning there in April, 1880, and dying in October, 1881. As Mr. Herford left Lancaster shortly after Mr. Barmby became his co-

pastor, the latter had sole charge of the place until 1858. His successor was the Rev. Henry Solly, who was educated at the General Baptist Academy, Kentish Town, and the University College, London. He entered the ministry in 1840, settling first at Yeovil. He was at Tavistock in 1842, Shepton Mallet in 1844, Cheltenham 1847, Carter Lane, London, 1852, and came to Lancaster in July, 1858, closing his ministry here in 1862. Mr. Solly has taken an active part in promoting social reforms; he now resides at Croydon without pastoral charge. He was followed at Lancaster by the Rev. John Calbraith Lunn, F.R.A.S., who was trained at Belfast, and began ministerial work in 1847 at Coseley. He was at King's Lynn in 1851, Evesham 1854, and came to Lancaster in 1863. He remained until 1877, and now resides at Warrenpoint, Co. Down, Ireland, without pastoral charge. He was brother to the Rev. Abraham Lunn, one of the Chorley ministers. The vacant pastorate at Lancaster was filled up by the Rev. William McQuhae Ainsworth, who received his training at the University and Manchester New Colleges, London. He began his ministry at Lancaster in September, 1877, and terminated it in April, 1883. In October, 1884, he became minister at Brixton, London, where he now labours. The Rev. Edward P. Hall followed in 1883, and left in 1887. He received his training at St. Joseph's Catholic College, St. Louis and Memphis, U.S.A., and is now pastor of the church at Trowbridge. The present minister, the Rev. John Channing Pollard, educated at the Manchester Home Missionary Board and Owens College, began his labours at Sunderland in Sept., 1883, and at Lancaster on September 2nd, 1888. It only remains for me to append a few sentences descriptive of the chapel and its position. It was stated at the commencement of this article that the exact date and place of the first Dissenting Chapel can not be given. Moor Lane is mentioned by Mr. Sugden, but this is uncertain. It would seem that a chapel in Nicholas Street, where the present one stands, existed about the middle of last century. St. Nicholas Street is narrow, dingy, and not at all inviting. The chapel stands on the right, going down. A small gate leads into a diminutive yard, on the left of which is the old chapel-house, a formidable, dreary-looking building with a ponderous door, built about 1782. Leaving the chapel-house, going up a flight of steps, and through

another narrow gateway we are led into a capacious graveyard, up the centre of which runs a pathway on to the chapel. The long side of the building faces St. Nicholas Street, but the door will be found to the right, and on the same side is another door leading up a long, narrow entry into Gage Street, which constitutes the back entrance for the worshippers. Internally the chapel is found to differ from most others. Immediately behind the visitor on entering is a kind of chancel, which contains pulpit, reading desk, Communion table, and organ and choir chamber. The roof is peculiar, being divided into small squares, finely decorated. It rather suggests a Council chamber for civic purposes than a place of worship. The chapel stands upon a slight elevation in the centre of a number of buildings as venerable looking as itself. It would nearly be "four square" if the chancel were taken away, which is evidently quite modern. It was rebuilt about 1786, when the Rev. John Harrison was minister, and considerably altered many years ago, but the walls are at least as old as 1786. It is a roomy building, and in good condition. A few tablets ornament the walls, amongst them being one in memory of the Rev. Franklin Baker, M.A., for many years minister of the Bank Street Unitarian Chapel, Bolton and who, after his retirement from that place, resided at Caton, and worshipped at St. Nicholas Street.

II.—HIGH STREET CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

THERE are two Congregational churches in Lancaster, the oldest of which is in High Street. Its position, favourable no doubt, a century ago, makes somewhat against it to-day, for it is not easily found. It and the Sunday school connected with it, built in 1856, whose front is in Middle Street, occupy nearly the whole of one side of High Street. The chapel stands a little back from the street, having a large graveyard in front. A pathway leads up the centre of the graveyard, on each side of which lie the flat tombstones, many of them worn and mouldering. The school is to the right, and a few trees linger about the old place—memorials of a former beauty. The chapel is a plain, substantial, stone building of

an oblong shape. Its long side faces the street, in which are five windows above, three below, and two doorways. Between the doors is a stone tablet, containing the date 1772, and above it a huge lamp, which no doubt is often called into requisition. Internally the chapel presents much that is interesting. From the doors lead two aisles across the chapel to the pulpit, below which is the Communion pew. Behind the pulpit are two doors, one of which leads up a few steps into the minister's vestry, and the other down into a lower chamber. Behind it also are two long diamond-shaped coloured glass windows, along the bottom of which runs the following:—"In Commemoration of the Centenary of the Chapel, 1873." The pews are old-fashioned, deep, straight-backed, and near the door, those in the centre are elevated, thus forming a diminutive kind of gallery. To the right and left of the pulpit are galleries; there is also one mainly occupied by the organ and choir. The antique-looking timepiece in the gallery front faces the preacher, as a kind of perpetual protest against long sermons. But the most remarkable thing about the chapel internally is the accumulation of marble tablets sacred to the memory of dear ones dead and gone. Almost every available space on the walls has been occupied by them. The preacher will find, as he stands in the pulpit, that there are literally

Tablets in front of him,
Tablets behind him,
Tablets to the left of him,
Tablets to the right of him,
Tablets above him,
Tablets below him.

Even the walls and the staircases leading into the gallery have been ornamented with these loving tributes to departed worth.

Those relating to the Dawson, Mansergh, and Walmsley families are amongst the oldest and most interesting.

The tablets have at least one thing to say—viz., that in years past the High Street Church had amongst its friends and adherents many important and wealthy families. There are few buildings which internally present a more venerable and sacred appearance than this, and its history is at once interesting and inspiring. About the way in which it originated there can be no doubt. It is a

repetition of the story which so often crosses the path of the reader of Lancashire Congregationalism. When Unitarianism began to show itself in the older interest in St. Nicholas Street, several of the families became dissatisfied and left; some at least attended the little chapel at Forton, a few miles south of Lancaster, whose history has already been given.

The great grandmother of the present owner of Aldcliffe Hall, E. B. Dawson, Esq., was one of those who went for worship to Forton. In Mr. Dawson's possession is a painting over a hundred years old, representing her in full dress, and holding a little dog, which it is said used to go to Forton Chapel with her.¹

In the memoir of the Rev. W. Alexander (by his son, the Rev. John Alexander) for many years a Congregational minister in Lancashire, appears the following :—

The place of worship which he [Mr. W. Alexander] first attended in Lancaster was the Presbyterian Chapel, to which he was probably attracted by the name. An orthodox minister, of the name of Grimshaw, had been formerly settled there; but since then it had slid through Arianism into Socinianism. Soon after he began his attendance there, the minister preached a sermon against extemporary prayer, which greatly excited his surprise and suspicion. . . . The same minister afterwards preached a sermon which, in my father's opinion, was still more heterodox and objectionable . . . "so that I seldom, if ever," says he, "went any more to that place. There was, I believe, only one place in Lancaster at that time in which Jesus was preached as the true God and eternal life. But such was the odium under which the place and people lay, that I no more thought of going there than to a Roman Catholic Chapel."²

¹ Isabel Dawson, the person here referred to, died April 28th, 1781, aged 66. There is a tablet inscribed to her memory in High Street Chapel. The dog is supposed to be buried at the foot of one of the trees in the garden at Aldcliffe Hall, but no stone marks the spot. It is interesting to note how these dog stories cluster around these old chapels. There are two or three still retailed in connection with the chapel at Tockholes. An old woman is said to have travelled every Sunday from Rivington to Tockholes, bringing her dog with her. Once the dog came alone, as the old lady was confined to her bed, and the good people wrote down the preacher's text, tied it round the dog's neck, and sent it to comfort the invalid. Long after she died it is said the dog continued to come to chapel. How much truth there is in these stories it is difficult to say, though, doubtless, there is some foundation for them.—*Vide* "History of Tockholes Chapel," p. 183.

² P. 17.

Eventually, however, Mr. Alexander settled at High Street, the place to which he here refers, and what he did, many others did also, and for the same reason. Dr. Halley's account of the origin of the church here does not contradict the foregoing statement. The "itinerant preachers" named by him would hardly have attracted a considerable "congregation" if things had been satisfactory at the other Nonconformist chapel. He writes thus:—

"The Independent church in that town [Lancaster] originated with some itinerant preachers, who by their popular ministrations attracted a congregation in a large room, fitted and furnished for religious worship. A few respectable families who were wearied with the dull preaching of the church encouraged these, and associated with their promoters in securing a small chapel which had been abandoned by its original occupants."

The dates of the formation of the church and erection of the chapel are matters of uncertainty. As already stated, the figures 1772 appear on a stone in the chapel front, and the "Lancashire Congregational Calendar" gives "church formed 1772," and "building erected 1771," but there is no authority for these dates. In a paper on the history of the church, read by the Rev. Francis Bolton, B.A., in connection with the Centenary celebrations on the 10th and 11th of February, 1874, he makes the following statement:—

Now by indenture of lease and release, bearing date respectively the 12th and 13th of February, 1773, the land on which this chapel stands was conveyed by Sarah Gibson to John Dawson. This document declares the purchase to have been made by the said John Dawson with money that was given and contributed by several pious and well-disposed persons in order to purchase the said ground, with intent that a chapel or meeting house for religious worship, for Protestants dissenting from the Church of England, might be erected thereon for promoting and advancing the interests of the Christian religion. And a building or edifice having been accordingly erected on the said ground, John Dawson, of Aldcliffe, in the county of Lancaster, esquire, conveyed the property to nine trustees by a deed bearing date 5th of May, 1777. The time of the erection of the chapel seems thus to be between the 13th of February, 1773, and the 5th of May, 1777. The first

¹ "Lancashire Puritanism and Nonconformity." Vol. ii., p. 445.

recorded interment in the adjoining burial ground took place in September, 1776. The date, 1772, in front of the chapel has been put up in recent years, and only represents the traditional date. But I have found no evidence in its support, and it seems scarcely reconcileable with the facts and dates already mentioned.

The probability is that the church had been founded somewhat anterior to the building of the chapel, and not as the Calendar says after that.¹ I have not been able to find out the "small chapel which had been abandoned by its original occupants,"² named by Dr. Halley, in which the Independents first worshipped; but about the first minister we have a little information. His name was Henry Hunt, a native of Dublin, during whose ministry the chapel in High Street was erected. Dr. Halley says that he ministered little more than three years, and that some unpleasantness arising in connection with the debt upon the building he resigned. About 1773 he settled at Delph, where he continued a useful ministry for thirteen years.³ In August, 1800, he became pastor of the church at Horsleydown, London, where he died June 20th, 1815, at the age of ninety years. He had retired from the ministry some two years before his death, and had been in the Congregational ministry over sixty years.⁴ The church records state that "after the erection of the meeting-house, the congregation was supplied by students educated by the Countess of Huntingdon." The Rev. Cornelius Winter preached at Lancaster sometime during 1775-76, and after him the Rev. George Burder comes upon the scene. He was born in London on the 5th of June, 1752, and for some time followed the profession of an artist there. He went to no college, but in private schools received a good training, and began preaching in the year 1776. His first charge was Lancaster, on account of his introduction to which he gives in the following words:—

¹ Amongst the registers belonging to High Street Chapel, and preserved at Somerset House, are two volumes of births and baptisms from 1760—1792 and 1760—1837 respectively. These suggest a much earlier date for the cause here than is generally supposed, unless they are the registers originally belonging to St. Nicholas Street.

² Mr. Bolton says: "I am informed this room was in St. Leonard Gate, near to Stonewell."

³ "Congregationalism in Yorkshire" (Miall), p. 251.

⁴ "Evangelical Magazine" for 1815, p. 320.

About the month of September [1777] Mr. Robert Gardner, of Lancaster, a sail-cloth manufacturer, who stood forwards to promote the Gospel in that town and neighbourhood, came to London, and was looking out for a minister either for Lancaster or for Ulverstone, where a chapel was then building. Having heard me two or three times he came to my house and made me a proposal of going down to Lancaster with him, and preaching in different places, so that I might form a judgment whether to settle there or not. After prayer, deliberation, and advice, I consented to go, and entirely laid aside my business as an artist. I left London with Mr. Gardner and Mr. Thomas Phillips, then minister at Elswick, near Preston, Lancashire, on horseback, Tuesday, Sept. 30, 1777. We spent the Sabbath, Oct. 5, at Walsall, and Wednesday at Bilston. We spent some time with Mr. Scott, at Wolleston, near Drayton. On Lord's Day, Oct. 19, I preached at Garstang in the morning and afternoon, and got to Lancaster, I think, in the evening. Mr. Gibbons had been preacher there for some months.¹

From his diary an account of his ordination is here extracted :—

Having received a unanimous call from the Church at Lancaster, I thought it my duty to accept it. I was solemnly ordained to the pastoral office on Thursday, Oct. 29th, 1778. Mr. MacQuhae, of Blackburn, delivered an introductory discourse, and asked the usual questions. Mr. Titus Knight, of Halifax, gave the charge from Acts xx., 28. Mr. Edwards, of Leeds, preached to the people from Is. lxi., 3. Mr. Knight also preached in the evening. And may I never forget that the vows of the Lord are upon me. On the following Sabbath, I preached in the morning from 2 Cor. iv., 7, and in the evening from Luke ix., 35. In the evening I catechised the children. In the course of the week, I removed from the house of Mr. Gardner, where I had boarded, to a small house of my own.²

On the 12th of January, 1779, Mr. Burder applied to the Lancaster Quarter Sessions for a license as minister, and took the oath, and signed the register. His labours were not confined to Lancaster. He itinerated much in the out districts, sharing these labours with the Rev. D. Gibbons, then at Ulverston.

One year he says that he finds himself to have ridden on horseback 2,500 miles, and preached 254 times. Preston, Poulton, Ulverston, Kendal, and many other places are largely indebted to his missionary labours.

His stay at Lancaster was not long. Early in 1783 he considered his work here to be done, and felt inclined to leave. On the 27th

¹ "Memoirs of the Rev. George Burder," p. 45.

² *Ibid.*, p. 69.

of July and August 3 he preached at Coventry, and eventually accepted the call which the church there presented to him. It cost him something to leave his Lancaster friends and those in the surrounding districts, as the following passage shows :—

“Intending shortly to leave Lancaster, I paid a farewell visit to several places where I had preached—to Kirkby-Lonsdale, Burton, Ulverstone, and Bootle. On the 11th of September I crossed, for the last time, the Sands between Ulverstone and Lancaster; the waters, in consequence of much rain, were broad and deep, but I was mercifully preserved. And now the painful moment of separation from my Lancaster friends, among whom I had laboured nearly six years, arrived. I took my leave of the pulpit on Lord’s Day, Oct. 12. I left Lancaster with my dear wife and child on Wednesday morning, Oct. 15, feeling no small pang at parting.”¹

Those were not the days of big salaries, though money was worth more than it is now. In the trustees’ minute book is the following entry :—

“November 4th, 1778.—At a meeting of the trustees, held at the vestry of the Dissenting Meeting-house, in Mount Street,² Lancaster, it was agreed that the sum of £50 per annum be given to the Rev. Mr. G. Burder, minister of the said Meeting-house, for the term of three years, to commence from the 1st inst.—By order of the trustees, Jno. Jackson.”

At the time of his resignation Mr. Burder was in receipt of £70 a year. His ministry at Coventry commenced on November 2nd, 1783, and after twenty years of successful labour there, in the midsummer of 1803, he removed to London to become pastor of the Fetter Lane Congregational Church. Whilst here he was for some time editor of the “*Evangelical Magazine*,” and Secretary of the London Missionary Society. This was his last sphere, and until death came he held unto it. He died May 29th, 1832, at the age of eighty years, and was interred in the Bunhill Fields, where so many of the great and good lie. He had at least two sons who entered the Congregational ministry—John Burder and Dr. H. F.

¹ “*Memoirs of the Rev. George Burder*,” p. 124.

² Then so called, but now High Street.

Burder, author of the interesting "Memoirs of the Rev. G. Burder," several times referred to. After Mr. Burder's removal from Lancaster, the church remained vacant for seven years. The names of some who supplied for a considerable time during that period have, however, been preserved.

One of these was the Rev. Thomas Bryson. He was born at Dalkeith, of poor but honest parents. He was early employed by Lady Huntingdon, and, in addition to Lancaster, laboured for a short time at Yelvertoft, Stamford, York, Derby, and several other places. His last charge was the Independent Meeting House in the New Road, St. George's-in-the-East, London. Here he remained until his death, which took place on April 24th, 1799, at the age of forty years. He was interred in the adjoining burial ground, and his tombstone, which contains a lengthy and deeply interesting inscription, states that he was "the bold opposer of error, the faithful monitor of the wicked, and the able defender of gospel truths."¹ He published a volume of sermons preached to his congregation in London, entitled—"A Comprehensive View of the real Christian's Character, Privileges, and Obligations: Being the Substance of a Course of Sermons on the Eighth Chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans."

The Rev. Mr. Hunt is also named, who is said to have gone afterwards to Ellesmere, in Shropshire, and thence to Stourbridge.² Is this the Mr. Hunt mentioned by Dr. Halley? If so, there is some confusion about him. The next settled pastor, however, at High Street after Mr. Burder was the Rev. Peter Samuel Charrier. His place of birth was London, and the date February 24th, 1770. His father is said to have been a French Protestant refugee, converted through the ministry of the celebrated Romaine. The following is from the "Evangelical Magazine" for 1811:—

"The Evils of Persecution and the Advantages of the British Constitution: A Sermon on the death of Mr. J. S. Charrier, of Portsmouth, who fled from Persecution in France in the year 1764. By John Griffin. Price 1s. 6d."³

¹ "Evangelical Magazine" for 1800, p. 89.

² "The Church Guide," by the Rev. John Sugden, B.A., p. 54.

³ P. 471.

In the notice upon this sermon it is said that Mr. Charrier, was "late French Master of the Royal Academy in His Majesty's Dock-yard, Portsmouth. He was bred to the sea, and was taken prisoner by the English. Having tasted the sweets of religious freedom in this country, he was unwilling to return to his own. He appears to have been brought to a knowledge of the gospel in its power under the ministry of Mr. Romaine, and continued to the time of his death, at the age of seventy-three, a professor of the truth as it is in Jesus." When he was only seventeen years of age, Peter Samuel Charrier was consecrated to the Christian ministry, and entered the Dissenting Academy, at Mile End, London, under the presidency of Dr. Addington. On the completion of his college course, in 1790, he was invited to Lancaster, and ordained as pastor on May 9th, 1792. After a useful ministry here, extending over nineteen years, he removed to Bethesda Chapel, Liverpool. His letter of resignation, dated March 31st, 1809, tells of the pain he felt in having to take himself away from his "dear Lancaster friends," and of his intention to remove in the month of June.

He died at Liverpool on March 29th, 1826, but his remains were interred in the ground adjoining High Street Chapel, the scene of his early labours. Just behind the pulpit is a handsome marble slab containing this inscription:—

A tribute of affection to the memory of]
 PETER SAMUEL CHARRIER,
 Nineteen years
 the faithful pastor of this church,
 and seventeen years
 of the Church at Bethesda, Liverpool.
 He died at Liverpool, March 29th, 1826.
 aged 56 years.
 His body rests in the tomb in the adjoining ground
 till Christ shall come.
 "I have not shunned to declare unto you
 the whole counsel of God." Acts xx., 27.
 "But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them
 that are lost." 2 Cor. iv., 3.

During his residence at Liverpool he for many years served the County Union as Secretary, and in the affairs of the denomination he appears to have taken a large interest. Like Mr. Slate, of

Preston, he was well versed in denominational history. In collecting materials for a history of Lancashire Nonconformity, afterwards used by Dr. Halley, Dr. Raffles obtained most valuable assistance from Mr. Charrier, whom he described as that "unfailing repository of dissenting anecdotes."¹ The following testimony is from the pen of the Rev. John Alexander, of Norwich, whose father, the Rev. W. Alexander, has already been mentioned as a member of the High Street Church during Mr. Charrier's ministry :—

"He was a man of decidedly Calvinistic theology ; of somewhat formal, but gentlemanly manners ; of ready wit and repartee ; rich in anecdotes ; faithful and affectionate in his friendships ; an exemplary Christian, and 'a good minister of Jesus Christ.' He had a deep double-bass voice, which he could modulate to much variety of tone, and which often rendered his preaching powerful and impressive. I recollect to this day some of the texts and sermons which arrested my attention, and affected me to tears, when I was quite a child ; and I cherish the remembrance of him with affectionate veneration. He was a good man, and a faithful preacher of the gospel."²

Mr. Charrier's successor at High Street was the Rev. Joseph France, M.A. He was born at Blackburn on the 13th of July, 1789, and was the son of Mr. John France, of that town. His sister became the wife of the Rev. (afterwards Dr.) Joseph Fletcher, of Chapel Street, Blackburn. He received his early training in a school kept by his maternal uncle, the Rev. Joseph Bealey, of Cockey Moor, and entered Hoxton College with a view to the ministry. His training was completed at Glasgow University, where he graduated Master of Arts, and came to Lancaster in 1812. His ordination as minister here took place on the 30th of August, 1815, of which the following is an account :—

Aug. 30.—Mr. Jos. France, who was a student at Hoxton Academy, but who completed his studies at Glasgow, was set apart to the pastoral office over the independent church at Lancaster. Mr. Whitridge, of Carlisle, read the scriptures and prayed ; Mr. Charrier, of Liverpool, formerly pastor of

¹ "Lancashire Puritanism and Nonconformity." Vol. ii., p. 429 (note).

² "The Church Guide," by the Rev. John Sugden, B.A., p. 59.

this church, gave the introductory discourse and asked the questions; Mr. Bradley, of Manchester, offered up the ordination prayer; Mr. Roby delivered the charge from Coloss. iv., 17; and Mr. Fletcher, of Blackburn, preached to the people. Mr. Raffles preached in the evening, and Mr. Bradley the preceding evening. Messrs. Grimshaw, of Garstang; Edwards, of Elswick; and Capper, of Kirkham, engaged in the devotional parts of the service.¹

Mr. France's ministry at Lancaster does not seem to have been happy. Not long after his settlement several of his congregation seceded, and the "trials incident to his position, combined with failing health," brought about his resignation at the end of August, 1819. On leaving Lancaster he took charge for a short time of the Silcoates Congregational School, near Wakefield, whence he removed to Ham, in Surrey, where he established a private seminary. As there was no place of worship in this village, he erected a neat little chapel on a part of his premises, where, until his death, he combined the duties of teacher and preacher. Mr. France died on Sept. 11th, 1854, at the age of sixty-five years. His remains were taken to his own little chapel, where a solemn service was held, and afterwards, at the request of many of the inhabitants, interred in the Ham Church, where a tablet has been erected to his memory.² His successor at Lancaster, was the Rev. Samuel Bell. He was born June 3rd, 1793, at Leeds, and was educated at Hoxton Academy, then under the presidency of Dr. Simpson. His first pastorate was Wrexham, where he laboured about five years, removing thence to Lancaster, where he began ministerial work on the second Sabbath in June, 1823. His recognition services took place on the 20th and 21st of August following, when the following ministers assisted:—Revs. P. S. Charrier, Liverpool; J. Grimshaw, Forton; G. Payne, Blackburn Academy; F. Parsons, Leeds; D. Edwards, Elswick; J. Holgate, Orrell; and Mr. Hargreaves.

During his ministry the building had to be enlarged, and the reopening services are thus recorded:—

On Friday evening, July 19th [1833], and on Lord's Day, July 21st, this place of worship, where the late Rev. G. Burder, and also the late Rev. P. S.

¹ "Evangelical Magazine" for 1815, p. 549.

² "Congregational Year Book" for 1855, p. 214. The obituary notices, as in this case, are often very seriously inaccurate.

Charrier successively laboured in word and doctrine, was formally re-opened after enlargement. The Rev. James Parsons, from York, preached on the Friday evening from Rom. xv., 29, on the Sabbath forenoon from John iv., 34, and on the Sabbath evening from John xiv., 19. On the Sabbath forenoon, the Rev. Samuel Bell, who for the last ten years has been pastor of the church and congregation, preached from John iii., 30; "He must increase." By the present alteration the chapel has been enlarged in size more than one-third; its dimensions now are about 60 feet by 45; and there is a commodious schoolroom underneath the new part, which is supposed to be capable of entertaining 300 children. The expense of enlargement has been mainly provided by the church and congregation, with the assistance of some kind friends in London; and they hope to liquidate the remainder by degrees, without having to appeal to the liberality of the religious public.¹

Mr. Bell removed to Stockwell, near London, in March, 1845, where he "conducted an academy for young gentlemen for a period of sixteen years, with untiring energy, perseverance, and success." Whilst there the University of Giessen conferred upon him the degrees of Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy. Dr. Bell died at Stockwell on July 22nd, 1861. His widow and some of his children still survive, and are members of the High Street Congregational Church, at Lancaster.² The Rev. (afterwards Dr.) James Fleming was the next minister. His birthplace was Smallholme, near Kelso, Roxburghshire, and the date of birth March 8th, 1816. On leaving school he became a tutor for several years, and afterwards studied at Edinburgh. Eventually he entered the Highbury College, and on the completion of his course became afternoon preacher in the church at Walworth, under the pastoral care of the Rev. George Clayton. On the first Sunday in July, 1845, he began his ministry at Lancaster, being ordained there on the 26th of August following, when Drs. Halley, Vaughan, Raffles, and others took part in the service. Again there was felt to be need of greater accommodation in the chapel, and in 1851 the chapel was re-pewed, the gallery enlarged, and other improvements effected, which cost about £358. On September 29th, 1853, Mr. Fleming resigned his charge, having accepted an invitation to the Kentish Town Church, near London, vacant through the secession of the Rev. William Forster to the Unitarians. Here he laboured

¹ "Evangelical Magazine" for 1833, p. 449.

² "Congregational Year Book" for 1862, p. 222.

until his death, which took place November 10th, 1879, in his sixty-fourth year. His remains were laid in the Highgate Cemetery, and in the funeral procession were "nearly all the Nonconformist ministers of various denominations for a long distance round Kentish Town."¹

Mr. Fleming's successor at Lancaster was the Rev. John Sugden, B.A., a returned missionary from India. He entered upon duty here on the 2nd of February, 1854. During his ministry the new and commodious schools in Middle Street and High Street were erected, in 1856, at a cost of about £1,300. He is the author of "The Church Guide and Manual," and by his researches he has laid under great obligations all future historians of Nonconformity in Lancaster. He resigned his charge here on May 1st, 1861, having accepted the position of Secretary to the London Congregational Association. In 1862 Mr. Sugden became pastor of the Congregational Church at Kingstown, Ireland, which position he retained until 1864. For many years afterwards he was bishop in the Free Episcopal Church of England. Following him at High Street is the Rev. David Harding. He was born at Dursley, Gloucestershire, April 3rd, 1831, trained at Cheshunt, and settled in 1860 at York Street, Dublin. He accepted the call to Lancaster on the 26th of June, 1863, and resigned his charge here on the 23rd of February, 1866. He next laboured at Chesham, Buckinghamshire, and in 1871 removed to Tonbridge, Kent. Here he died in the midst of his labours. The following pathetic account of his sad end deserves to be inserted :—

"In March, 1878, he visited a sick member of the church, not knowing the nature of the illness. Whilst on his knees in prayer by her bed side he was smitten with a deadly infection. A few days developed smallpox of the most malignant type. Medical skill was of no avail; the brain was attacked, delirium set in, and on Wednesday, March 13th, he passed away. The next night, at nine o'clock, his remains were laid in the St. Stephen's churchyard. A bereaved church, a sorrow-stricken widow, and four fatherless children were left to mourn his sudden departure in the prime of his days."²

¹ "Congregational Year Book" for 1880, p. 324.

² "Congregational Year Book" for 1872, p. 318.

On the 8th of October, 1866, the Rev. Elvery Dothie, B.A., accepted an invitation to the vacant pastorate at Lancaster. He was trained at New College, and had previously laboured at Portsmouth a few years. He resigned his charge at Lancaster, April, 1872, for South Norwood, London. He is now residing at Greenock without pastoral charge. The Rev. Francis Bolton, B.A., educated at Springhill College, and who had previously laboured at Elland, in Yorkshire, began his ministry at Lancaster in September, 1872. In the following year, on the 10th and 11th of February, the church celebrated its Centenary, and Mr. Bolton read a sketch of the history of the church, which contains many useful items of information. He terminated his pastorate at High Street on June 29th, 1884, and now resides in London without charge. The present minister, the Rev. J. F. Cowley, educated at Lancashire College, commenced his labours here on July 12th, 1885, and was ordained on the 29th of October following, the Rev. Thomas Arnold (Northampton), and Professors Scott, Turner, and Hodgson taking part in the service. Dr. Thomson, of Manchester, preached on the following Sunday.

At the time of the present minister's settlement the outlook for the church was not very hopeful. From a variety of causes the congregations had dwindled down to thirty or forty people, the church roll stood at about thirty, and it was feared the building would have to be closed. It is pleasing to know that the church has taken a new lease of life, and marks of steady progress are everywhere visible.

III.—THE CENTENARY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

IN 1873 a number of persons seceded from the High Street Church and formed a second Congregational interest in the town. They purchased an antique-looking mansion in St. Leonard Gate, formerly occupied by George Burrow, Esq., which they converted into school and chapel. "The interior," writes one, "after the removal of the house partitions, was finished in a very handsome manner, and elegantly provided with open seats and the usual furniture of a chapel, the roof being divided into rectangular sections and orna-

mented in a very appropriate style."¹ A new wing in the form of an apse was added to the western side, and the cost of the whole amounted to over £2,000. There are associated with this building two or three interesting traditions which deserve mention. Beneath the school there is a kind of cave, now used for heating purposes, in which it is said George Fox, with a few friends, was accustomed to worship. The arched roof presents the appearance of a Roman prison, being very similar to one of the cells in the neighbouring Castle, and a small square window of some seven or eight inches allowed the worshippers here only a "dim religious light." In the lower room or cellar is a large trap-door, which leads into a vault beneath, whence a passage goes to the Lune, by means of which spirits and wines were conveyed hither in the old smuggling days. In this room also is a strong iron ring attached to the floor, like the one which may yet be seen in Fox's cell in the Castle, to which prisoners were chained. The building was opened for worship in July, 1873, and in that same month the Rev. Adam Scott, pastor of the E. V. Church at Airdrie, began his labours as the first minister. In October following the church was formally constituted, the Rev. R. M. Davies, of Oldham, amongst others, taking part in the service. The congregation increasing, a larger building became a necessity, and the Palatine Hall was rented. Here worship was held until 1879, when the "Centenary Church"² was completed and opened. This handsome and commodious edifice is in the Romanesque style of architecture. At the south-west angle is a spire, which, with the tower, rises to the height of 120 feet from the ground. The galleries provide sittings for over 300 persons, and the ground floor will accommodate 500 worshippers. The cost of the building, including the site, was about £7,500. In October, 1883, Mr. Scott removed to Sale, in Cheshire, where he still labours, being succeeded in February, 1884, by the present pastor, the Rev. H. W. Smith, from Fleetwood. The church is one of the strongest and most enterprising in the Preston District, and gives promise of a career of honour and usefulness. There are mission stations connected with it at Halton, Hest Bank, and Aldcliffe.

¹ "Lancaster Churches and Chapels," p. 151.

² So called because it originated in 1873, the Centenary year of the High Street Congregational Church.

IV.—MORECAMBE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

MORECAMBE is another illustration of rapid growth in a Lancashire town. It has superseded the little village of Poulton-le-Sands, which is at least as old as the Conquest. "Since the opening of railway communication in 1848," says Baines, "the old village of Poulton has become known by the name of Morecambe, and has been transformed from a mere fishing village into a considerable watering-place."¹

One of the most prominent objects in the town is the little Congregational Church, with its tall, handsome spire, situated in Clark Street. It was erected in 1863, and is one amongst many which commemorate the ejection of the 2,000 ministers in 1662.

From the "Congregational Year Book" for 1863 the following items respecting this building are taken :

The schoolroom stands in the rear of the chapel, and is flanked on three sides by a good street or road. The tower at the south-west angle is 80 feet in height, and 14 feet square, and contains the access to the chapel, and also to the proposed galleries. The organ and singing gallery are formed in a large arched recess in the gable-wall behind the pulpit. The floor of the gallery forms the roof of the vestry and classrooms beneath, which are situated between the chapel and the schoolroom. The schoolroom in the rear of the main building is 43 feet long and 28 feet wide, and will accommodate 200 children. The chapel will accommodate on the ground floor about 350 persons, and the intended galleries about 200. The total cost of erection, including chapel, school, &c., will be about £2,000, towards which the Lancashire Bicentenary Committee have promised the sum of £500. E. G. PALEY, Esq., architect.

The story of Congregationalism in this town is soon told. The church may be regarded as the offspring of the Congregational Church at High Street, Lancaster. "In the year 1852," writes one, "the necessity of erecting a place for public worship at Morecambe was deeply impressed on the minds of the church and congregation assembling at the Independent Chapel at Lancaster, then under the pastoral care of the Rev. J. Fleming, but owing to the want of funds and other difficulties the project was unhappily abandoned." In the year 1860,² however, efforts were made

¹ "History of Lancashire" (Ed. 1870). Vol. ii., p. 579.

² "Congregational Year Book" for 1863.



MORECAMBE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

again by the High Street Church to introduce Congregationalism here, and not without success. The Rev. John Sugden, B.A., and his wife were specially interested in the movement. The minutes of the Preston District Meeting for February, 1861, contain the following respecting Morecambe :—

The claims of this increasing watering place were brought before the meeting by the Secretary, also by Mr. McKinlay and Mr. Dawson. It was stated that a feeling of deep interest in divine truth had been awakened in the minds of many of the people, that several had joined the church at Lancaster, and that there was a good attendance at the week-day meetings held here and in the neighbourhood. It was moved by Mr. E. B. Dawson, and seconded by the Rev. W. Knox, that £50 be requested for an Evangelist for Morecambe and the surrounding villages.

Previous to the erection of the chapel above described, worship was held in a wooden building, which was opened on the first Sunday in August, 1861. The following report presented to the District Meeting of February, 1862, is singularly encouraging :—

The return from this station gave the population at 2,900; chapel accommodation for 200 adults. Number in attendance on Divine worship—morning, 140 adults, 70 scholars; evening, 200 adults; week night, 30. Church members, 3; Sabbath school teachers, 10; scholars, 120. Total paid for the ministry, £50; total raised for general purposes, £724 3s. 5d. The grant from the Union was £50. There was no written communication to the meeting from Morecambe, in the absence of which E. B. Dawson, Esq., Mr. David Smyth, and Mr. Thomas Ball made cheering statements severally in regard to the condition and prospects of this much-frequented watering place. It was hoped that a new chapel would soon be in the course of erection; £700 had been raised for this object.¹

Differences seem to have arisen here early, for in the minutes for 1864 it is said there was a long conversation at the District Meeting on "the general state and condition of this preaching station, during which it appeared that if some difficulties could be overcome, and if the friends at Morecambe could remain united and work harmoniously together, a bright future was before it." The minutes further say that "a vigorous effort, and it was believed a successful one, was about to be made to remove the debt on the chapel." In the minutes for 1865 appear the following :—

¹ "Minutes of the Preston District."

The circumstances of Morecambe were considered. The chapel was occupied by Mr. Davies and his party against the wishes of all the Trustees save one. It was intimated that a change might be looked for in a little time, when the Trustees would possess the premises and have control of the pulpit. A provisional grant was recommended to the sanction of the Executive Committee in the terms of the following resolution: "That provided the chapel at Morecambe should be restored to the Trustees and the rightful owners thereof, as it is hoped and expected it soon will be, a grant at the rate of £60 per annum be continued for the support of the cause of Christ under such new arrangements."

These troubles led to the dissolution of the church in 1866; but soon after, if not at the same meeting, a new church was formed. The Rev. E. Dothie, B.A., minister of the Congregational Church at Lancaster, presided over the meeting at which this was done, and a call was at once given to the Rev. C. Rhodes, an Airedale College student. This he accepted, and entered upon his labours in 1866. He remained until 1874, when he removed to East Hartlepool, Durham; thence, in 1884, to Royston, in Cambridge-shire, and is now labouring at Stonehouse, Devon.¹ The present minister, the Rev. H. W. Burgoyne, who was trained at New College, and for a short time held a pastorate at Sutton Valence, in Kent, began duty here in 1875. Previous to his settlement the church again sought and received help from the Union funds. In 1882 Mr. Barton, of Lancaster, presented to the church a new organ. To make room for it, and improve the building, the arch behind the pulpit was opened out, and the organ was placed upon the ground floor instead of upon the old loft. At the same time a minister's vestry was made, also a lecture room, built upon some ground adjoining the schoolroom. Within two years all was paid for. In 1887 the church ceased to be a recipient from the Union funds.

V.—CARNFORTH: THE EXTINCT NONCONFORMIST INTEREST AND CONGREGATIONALISM.

It is not generally known that Carnforth had a Nonconformist interest of considerable importance well on for two centuries ago. Such, however, was the case, and I now lay before the reader such

¹ He is now living in retirement near Carnforth.†

scraps of information about it as have been obtained. It will be as well to say that he had better not raise his expectations high ; for every attempt to get together such facts as would ensure a continuous story has been attended with failure, simply because every document belonging to the place appears to have perished. Its existence, however, thus long ago is put beyond doubt, and the names of one or two of its ministers have been preserved. Exactly how and when it originated cannot be ascertained, but in Dr. Evans's list of "Presbyterian Chapels and Charities," drawn up between the years 1717 and 1729, appears Carnforth, to which is joined Tatham. There was at that time a congregation of 138, of whom seventeen were county voters. The names of two ministers are given, viz., James Crossland and Robert Hesketh. Respecting Mr. Crossland I have no information beyond the fact that he removed to Salkeld, in Cumberland, and thence to Crookham, in Northumberland, where he laboured at least fifteen years. We are on more certain ground when we come to Mr. Hesketh. He was the son of the Rev. Robert Hesketh, for some time minister at Crayen, in Yorkshire. Robert Hesketh, junior, was ordained at Carnforth on the 27th of October, 1725. A full account of this service is given in Peter Walkden's Diary, who says :—

Got my mare as soon as day appeared, and set forward towards Carnforth, and got there about 10 a clock, and put in my mare at a private house in Carnforth, and got on my linen and went to the meeting-house, and finding the door locked, I went to widow Peel's where I met with my brethren ; and in a little time we went to the chapel, and Mr. Cooper opened the exercise with prayer, read the 132nd Psalm, the 3rd of the 1st Timothy, and we sung part of the 132nd Psalm ; then Mr. Lomax prayed then I prayed ; then Mr. Aray preached from Jer. 3, 15—"And I will give my pastors according to my own heart," &c. Then Mr. Hesketh satisfactorily answered every question. Then we set him apart for the work of the ministry, and Mr. Atkinson gave a charge from 1st Timothy, 4 to 16. . dismissed the people ; then all the ordained ministers signed Mr. Hesketh's certificate.¹

Including Mr. Bent, of Lancaster, a candidate, and Mr. Hesketh, the newly-ordained minister, there were present twelve ministers, which was the required number. After the service was over Mr. Walkden says :—

¹ P. 23.

We all went to widow Peel's but staid little—only while each had a glass of wine; then parted; and Mr. Aray and I came direct to Lancaster ere [where?] we refreshed ourselves, at one Armstrong's, who keeps the Blue Anker, and sat an hour; so came to Mr. Aray's.¹

To the ministers and their congregations a century and a half ago there seemed nothing incongruous in seeking a "refresher" at "Widow Peel's," "the Blue Anchor," and other similar places, previous to engaging in the worship of God's House. The inns of those days appear to have been different in character from what they now are, and, on the other hand, people's ideas have considerably changed, and for the better. A full account of Mr. Hesketh and his connections has already been given, to which the reader is referred.² It is only necessary to say that he left Carnforth soon after his ordination, in 1739 he was settled at Eastwood, in Yorkshire, removing thence to Northowram, where he laboured for twenty-nine years. His death took place January, 19th, 1774, and his remains were laid in Northowram Chapel yard. Whether any minister served the chapel after Mr. Hesketh I do not know. Probably with Lancaster so near, where there was a Nonconformist congregation of 260, the cause at Carnforth would decline. At any rate, I have not met with any other minister's name in connection with the place. It appears, however, that services were held in the chapel, at least occasionally, until towards the end of last century. The building is still standing, and is spoken of by some of the more aged inhabitants as the old "Presbyterian Chapel." It is a low, unpretentious structure, and is in a most dilapidated condition. There is nothing about it to indicate the sacred uses to which it was once put. Viewed from behind, it appears much higher than it does in front, because it stands on sloping ground. It is near the Canal bridge, whence a good view of the surrounding scenery can be obtained. As already stated, worship was held in it until about the close of the last century. Eventually it was closed, and there being no claimant for the property, it fell into the hands of the township authorities, who converted it into two cottages and a school—the cottages being occupied by persons receiving parochial relief. The Charity Commissioners next inter-

¹ P. 24.

² See ante pages 157-159.

ferred, and sold the property to Mr. Haslam, who taught a school therein for some years. It was afterwards obtained by the Wesleyans, and converted by them into a chapel, being opened as such about 1849. Here they worshipped until the erection of their present building, some twenty years ago. The property is now owned by Mr. Thomas Skirrow, of Lancaster, and has been converted into a smithy. A part of the building, formerly a cottage, but now untenanted and ruinous, still belongs to the township. In the extract from Walkden's Diary, previously given, there is a reference to Widow Peel's house, where the diarist and his brother ministers had each "a glass of wine" before they "parted." It is clear from the passage that this house was in close proximity to the chapel. The Shovel Inn is not more than twenty yards away. Over its doorway are the initials M.M., and the date 1750; but, as Peter Walkden wrote of what took place in 1725, that could not be the house. On the opposite side, and the same distance from the chapel, is an older structure still, over whose doorway are yet to be seen relics of what once supported two or three balls. This, until quite recently, was the Golden Ball Inn, and, I imagine, Widow Peel's house. It is in the recollection of some of the older inhabitants that the property formerly belonged to the Peel family. Unfortunately the original deeds of this house, as also of the chapel, have been lost, consequently the identity of the buildings must be left in some uncertainty.

Twenty-five years ago an attempt was made to establish a Congregational interest at Carnforth. In the Report of the Lancashire Congregational Union, ending April, 1866, it is said that an agent had been "labouring here for nine months," but there had been little result because of the "changing character of the population," and because "no suitable preaching place" could be obtained. The agent's name was Mr. E. Leach, and the station was superintended by the Rev. D. Harding, of the High Street Congregational Church, Lancaster. Shortly after this Mr. Leach withdrew, and the effort was abandoned for the time being.

The present Congregational Church at Carnforth owes its existence largely to a secession from the Wesleyans in 1878. These, together with a few Congregationalists resident in the district, met in a cottage belonging to Mr. Lambert. The Rev. A. Scott, then

minister of the Centenary Congregational Church, Lancaster, was urged to visit the neighbourhood with a view to establishing a permanent cause here. This he did, and a room was rented, furnished, and opened by him for worship on May 21st, 1880. A grant was obtained from the Union funds, and the pastor of the Centenary Church, assisted by laymen, worked the station. A plot of ground for a new chapel had already been obtained in a commanding position, and a school chapel was erected in 1881. The year following saw the settlement as pastor of the Rev. W. H. Towers—who is a native of Nether Kellett, close by—and whose ministerial training was obtained at the Nottingham Institute. He removed in September, 1886, to Oldham Road, Manchester, where he still labours. The Rev. J. Harrison, educated at Glasgow, and who had previously laboured at Cleator Moor, in Cumberland, entered upon duty as successor to Mr. Towers on the last Sunday in 1886, and continues to be the minister here. In the Sunday school are some 250 scholars, and the membership of the church is about 80. There is an excellent Day school here, commenced some six years ago, which has about 250 scholars. Joined to Carnforth are preaching stations at Bolton-le-Sands and Warton, but more important still is the little church at Nether Kellett, some three miles away. The cause here owes its existence to the late Miss Bateman, “who for 56 years laboured as a Christian worker and teacher ’ among the people. The work took definite shape in 1859. Services were conducted in a barn “altered so as to afford accommodation for worship and school purposes.” On the 10th of February, 1869, the present chapel was opened for service. Its cost was £500, “besides the excavations, which were made by the young men connected with the congregation, and the carting, which was done by some of the neighbouring farmers.” It is described as “rustic Gothic in style, 41 feet long by 25 feet wide, well lighted, lofty, and well ventilated. Externally, plain but effective; internally, cheerful and comfortable.” A grant of £150 was obtained from the Lancashire and Cheshire Building Society, and the remainder was paid off within a month of the opening. It will seat over 200 people. Up to quite recently it had a sort of loose connection with the High Street Congregational Church,

¹ “Lancashire Congregational Calendar” for 1869-70.

but on Wednesday, February 19th of this year, it was formed into a separate church. The Rev. J. F. Cowley, Lancaster, presided, and the Revs. J. Harrison, Carnforth ; B. Nightingale, Preston ; T. Slevan, Poulton-le-Fylde ; and Councillor Gilchrist took part in the service. The names of some fifty-seven persons were given as those who wished to be associated in Christian fellowship. Mr. Harrison has this church also under his care.





GRANGE-OVER-SANDS.

CHAPTER V.

NONCONFORMITY IN THE FURNESS DISTRICT.

I.—GRANGE-OVER-SANDS.

THIS beautiful seaside resort, like most watering places on the Lancashire coast, is of quite recent growth. Its name, it is true, is old, and points to the fact that in this district the Monks of Cartmel had once a grange, or storehouse, for their crops grown here ; but the houses, shops, hotels, &c., have sprung up since 1857, when the line from Carnforth to Ulverston was opened. Previous to this, Furness held communication with the more southern parts of Lancashire by means of coaches, which crossed the Sands. The journey from Hest Bank to Kent's Bank, which was about eleven miles, was attended with peculiar danger. Over a century ago the Rev. G. Burder, who itinerated much in these parts, says that he had "some very dangerous journeys across the Sands," the "waves sometimes breaking over" his "horse's neck ;" and in the graveyard of Cartmel Church are to be seen the graves of over one hundred who at various times have been overtaken by the tide and drowned whilst making the journey. Of necessity, then, this part of the county was much shut off from the other until the railway brought it within easy and safe reach. Grange is in a quiet nook of Morecambe Bay, and, being sheltered from the north and east winds by the lofty fells behind, wears an Edenic glory in summer, and in winter is mild and safe as a residence for invalids. The Episcopalians, Wesleyans, and Catholics have each their sanctuary for worship, and over a year ago, on July 21st, 1889, the Congregationalists commenced work here. It was at first deemed advisable to hold services



HILLOF HOAD, ULVERSTON.

experimentally for a period of thirteen or fourteen weeks during the summer season. Eventually, however, a room was taken, and opened on the date above named by the Rev. James Wayman, of Blackpool, who is especially interested in the movement. This room, which is the lecture hall of the Liberal Club, holds some forty people, and, not being well situated, the measure of success has not been great. The attendances have varied from fourteen to forty. Supplies have been sent principally by Mr. Wayman, a grant of £30 having been made for the purpose from the funds of the Union.

II.—ULVERSTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

ULVERSTON, not Ulverstone, is the tun, town, or vill of Ulf, Vulf, Wolf, a common name amongst the Northmen who ravaged these parts of England during the ninth or tenth centuries. Its history begins with the Domesday Book when it was a mere vill. Then its lordship passed in the early part of the twelfth century into the possession of Stephen, Earl of Bologne, afterwards King of England. By him it was presented unto the monks of Furness after the erection of the Abbey in 1127. The town is situated in a valley, and, except on the side where it runs out towards Morecambe Bay, is surrounded by hills of a considerable height. On the north side is Hoad Hill, whence a good view of the town and its surroundings can be obtained. It is a stiff climb, but the pedestrian is well repaid for his efforts. From its summit by night the little town, with its dark mass of buildings, appears nestling snugly in the valley at its foot. A few lights play fitfully about, a long, thin, silvery line to the left points out the direction of the canal on its way to the sea, and an occasional glimmer yet further to the left indicates the position of Carnforth and Morecambe. By day the houses appear huddled closely together, and beyond them may just be seen the chimneys of Barrow. To the left are the canal and the vast expanse of waters beyond, with Chapel Island in the centre. Conishead Priory and a few tall chimneys give variety to



ULVERSTON CHURCH.

the scene, and whilst the eye is turned in that direction a train comes steaming across the waters, which run on until they are lost in the mountains; whilst behind is a wild region, where the “everlasting hills” seem to go on for ever. An eccentric character used to say that from Hoad Hill Lancaster Castle and Church could quite easily be seen, and, on putting his glass to his eye, that he could *hear the music in the church*. The town is environed with objects of interest. First comes the old Church of St. Mary, founded about 1111, with its Norman porch, its massive tower, and registers going back to 1545. Then there is the quaint little Grammar School, standing in one corner of a field away out of the town to the north, erected about 1738. Hoad Hill has already



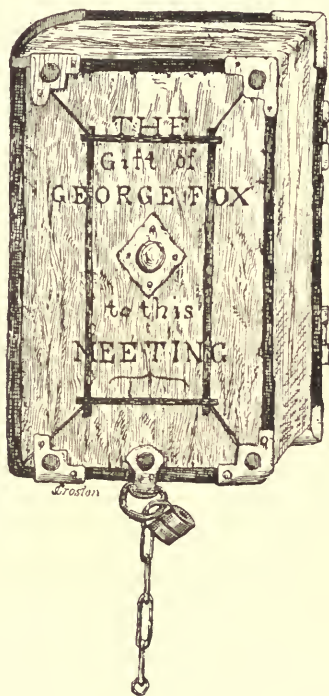
FOX'S CHAPEL, ULVERSTON.

been named, on whose summit is a colossal monument, erected in honour of Sir John Barrow, Bart. Conishead Priory is also close by, which was “originally a hospital for the indigent and leprous of Ulverston and its environs,” but eventually it was promoted to a Priory, and appropriated to the Black Canons by the founder, William, baron, of Kendal, afterwards William de Lancaster, about the middle of the twelfth century. Swarthmoor Hall is not more than two miles distant, close to which George Fox’s quaint little meeting-house can still be seen in all its rustic splendour. Over its doorway is the following inscription:—

EX. DONO G.F.

1688.

Within are still preserved George Fox's Bible—the Treacle Bible—bearing date 1541; also his chair, bed-posts, and travelling chest. Blessedly free from ornamentation the building is, except that the ivy may be seen clinging to its walls and a swarm of daffodils has

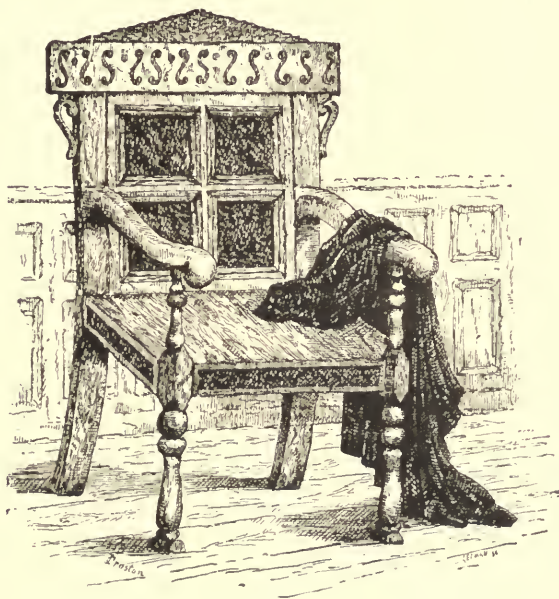


FOX'S BIBLE.

taken possession of the surrounding graveyard. All this, however, and much more, must reluctantly be set aside, because of the exigencies of space.

Ulverston contributed one to the noble 2,000 Nonconformists who went out in 1662. This was the Rev. Mr. Lamvet, or Lampit, of whom Calamy has the following :—"A warm and lively preacher. After his ejection he lived obscurely beyond the Sands, and died

in 1677."¹ George Fox, in his Journal, refers several times to Mr. Lampitt, and in not very graceful language. It is, indeed, impossible to read Fox's Journal without a feeling of regret that so good a man should have allowed himself to be so swayed by a narrow, intolerant spirit, and should have lent himself to such bitter, offensive language as often occurs therein. From that Journal the following is extracted, which, in the light of Calamy's statement,



FOX'S CHAIR.

will need to be discounted very considerably. Writing in 1652, he says :—

From hence I went to Ulverstone and to Swarthmore, to Judge Fell's; whither came one Lampitt, a priest, who was a high notionist. With him

¹ "Nonconformist's Memorial" (1802). Vol. ii., p. 378.

I had a great deal of reasoning; for he would talk of high notions and perfection, and thereby deceived the people. He would have owned me, but I could not own nor join with him, he was so full of filth. . . . When I came [to the steeple-house at Ulverston], Lampitt was singing with his people; but his spirit was so foul, and the matter they sung so unsuitable to their states, that after they had done singing I was moved of the Lord to speak to him and the people.

He continues :—

When they had haled me to the common, moss side, a multitude following, the constables and other officers gave me some blows over my back with their willow rods, and thrust me among the rude multitude, who, having furnished themselves with staves, hedge-stakes, holm or holly-bushes, fell upon me and beat me on my head, arms, and shoulders, till they deprived me of sense, so that I fell down on the wet common. . . . When I came to Swarthmore I found the friends there dressing the heads and hands of friends and friendly people which had been broken or hurt that day by the professors and hearers of Lampitt. My body and arms were yellow black, and blue with the bruises I received amongst them.¹

It is scarcely fair to put all this upon the shoulders of "Priest Lampitt." The good Quaker's own conduct was not such as was likely to conserve the peace. *Fortiter in re* he might be, but *Suaviter in modo* he was not. At any rate, on the authority of Calamy, Lampitt must be reckoned amongst the confessors of the seventeenth century who suffered so much for conscience and for God. As early, then, as 1662 Nonconformity appears in Ulverston, but it was not until more than a century after that a Dissenting congregation was gathered here, and a chapel erected. The reason for this is not difficult to find. The Five Mile Act and others of its class banished Nonconformity from the towns, and sent it into the rural districts. And what obtained all over the land did so here. A few miles farther north, and right amongst the hills, the Nonconformists worshipped at Tottlebank,² Broughton

¹ "Fox's Journal" (Third Edition, 1765), pp. 71, 79.

² At this place there is a Baptist Church, which was founded in 1669, of which the Rev. Gabriel Camelford was the first pastor. With this good man we shall meet again later. The history of this church does not come within the scope of this work, being limited to the Congregational and old Presbyterian Churches. There is, however, good ground for saying it was as much Congregational as Baptist for many years during its early history.

Tower,¹ and Hawkshead,² and were probably joined by their brethren from Ulverston. The town was favoured with visits from George Whitefield and John Wesley. Mr. Whitefield, writing to the Countess of Huntingdon from Kendal on June 26th, 1750, says :—

“Last Saturday evening, and on Lord’s Day, I preached at Ulverstone. There Satan made some small resistance: a clergyman, who looked more like a butcher than a minister, came with two others and charged a constable with me. But I never saw a poor creature sent off in such disgrace. I believe good was done in the town.”³

Mr. Wesley, under date June 5th, 1752, (Friday) says :—

“I went on with Mr. Milner to Ulverstone. Here a very convenient place for preaching was offered. But few people had any desire to hear. So I went quietly back to my inn.”⁴

In 1745 the house of Mr. Myles Sandys, a Baptist, was licensed as a preaching place in Ulverston. Was this the “convenient place” offered to Wesley, and the place where Whitefield preached so that “good was done?” It would be interesting to know, and it is not at all unlikely. Other occasional preachers at Ulverston, previous to the formation of the Congregational interest, were the Revs. W. Romaine and Jonathan Scott, better known as “Captain” Scott. This good man, who was ordained as a preacher at large at

¹ The owner and occupant of Broughton Tower at this time was Roger Sawrey, an old Cromwellian soldier, who was present at the formation of the church at Tottlebank. He was called “praying Sawrey,” and in the Cockermouth Church Book are numerous references to him, which show that he was a gifted and godly man. He died August 6th, 1699. There seems to have been here a Nonconformist meeting, and the Rev. Robert Stott, who was afterwards at Keswick, is named as one of the ministers. (*Vide* “Presbyterian Chapels and Charities,” by T. S. James. p. 654.)

² In the work mentioned in the preceding note the “Tower of Hawkshead” is given amongst the old Presbyterian Chapels. Between the years 1717-1729 there was a congregation of 88, of whom 18 were county voters. Mr. Gardiner is the minister named.

³ “Life and Times of Whitefield.”

⁴ “Wesley’s Journal (1864). Vol. ii., p. 253.

Lancaster, on the 18th of September, 1776, ranks with Whitefield and Wesley in his itinerant labours for Evangelical religion. During the years 1774 to 1777 his visits to these northern parts of Lancashire were not infrequent, and in 1774 or 1775 he is said to have visited Ulverston and preached in a factory in the Ellers. The result was that a congregation was gathered in a barn at Stocksbridge, probably in 1775.

The first minister named in connection with Ulverston is a Rev.



CAPTAIN JONATHAN SCOTT.

James Unsworth.¹ In the Ulverston Parish Registers, amongst the list of marriages, appears the following :—"Sept. 12, 1777.—James Unsworth, Dissenting minister, and Dinah Pennington, widow,

¹ In the "History of Airedale College," by Mr. Horsfall Turner, is given a list of students educated at Heckmondwike Academy by the Rev. James Scott, amongst them being James Unsworth, who was there in 1776.

both of Ulverston, by License." Nothing is known about him, and if he was more than a temporary supply he does not seem to have remained long. It was about this time that the congregation occupied a room at Town End, which had been used by the "Players." In 1777 land was secured for the erection of a chapel. "With the purchase of the site," says the Rev. J. Barton Bell, in a MS. account of the church, "we would have hoped that the difficulties arising from external opposition would have terminated, but it was not so. No sooner were the foundations laid, and the walls began to rise, than they were thrown down under cover of darkness. Again and again was this done, the work accomplished during the day being thrown down during the night, until the little band of brave workers were told off in relays to guard the building." Eventually, however, the work was completed, and the building was opened July 8th, 1778. The preachers on the occasion of the opening were:—Morning, Rev. G. Burder, of Lancaster, from Psalm cxxxvi., 1; afternoon, Rev. D. Gibbons, from Matthew xvi., 18; evening, Rev. Luke Collins, from 1 Cor. iii., 11. It is said that "a great number of persons were present." For a little while the place is said to have been supplied by the Revs. G. Burder, A. Allatt, of Forton, and Thomas Phillips, of Elswick, all of whom were separated from Ulverston by a good stretch of country. Distance, however, in those days seems to have been feared neither by ministers nor people, though the means of getting about were not equal to those we can now command. Mr. Burder was a warm friend of this infant cause, and along with Mr. Gibbons, to be named presently, preached for some time at Lancaster and Ulverston "two Sabbaths in turn."

The Rev. Daniel Gibbons, already mentioned, who was educated at the Countess of Huntingdon's College, Trevecca, seems to have been the first stated minister at Ulverston after the building of the chapel. Mr. Burder, writing under date Oct. 19th, 1777, says that Mr. Gibbons had been preacher at Lancaster some months then; and it is certain he was at Ulverston towards the end of 1779. His ordination here as minister took place on July 5th, 1780, when

¹ "Memoirs of the Rev. G. Burder," p. 60.

the Rev. Thomas Phillips, of Elswick, gave him the charge from Rev. ii., 10, and the Rev. G. Burder preached to the people from Heb. xiii., 17. On the 30th of the same month Mr. Gibbons preached at the opening of the Bootle Chapel, in Cumberland. The sermon was afterwards published under the title of "A True Guide to Happiness," and dedicated to Joseph Whitridge, Esq., to whom Bootle Chapel owed its existence. In the preface, Mr. Gibbons says :—

"The degeneracy of the present age, from the doctrinal articles of the Church, is truly deplorable, and loudly calls upon all lovers of our Lord Jesus in sincerity to endeavour the extirpation of those Arian, Socinian, and Pelagian tenets, which have been substituted in their stead."¹

Mr. Gibbons was not only ordained in July, and preached the sermon just referred to, but on the 24th of that month he married, at the Ulverston Parish Church, Mary Green, widow, of Ulverston. This good man, unto whom Congregationalism in the northern parts of Lancashire and the adjoining counties is greatly indebted, laboured at Ulverston until September 18th, 1785, and on the 11th of December following passed into the heavens about "two o'clock on Sabbath morning."² To the left of the pulpit is a marble tablet containing the following inscription :—

Sacred to the Memory of the
 REVD. DANIEL GIBBONS,
 About eight years minister of this Chapel,
 who died December 11th, 1785,
 aged 30 years.

Also of MARY GIBBONS, wife of the above,
 who died April 13th, 1806, aged 65 years.

The memory of the just is blessed.

The Rev. Robert Ellis, a native of Wales, and, like his predecessor, educated at Trevecca, succeeded Mr. Gibbons on the 18th of November, 1786. He had previously been at Duke Street,

¹ "Congregational Magazine" for 1822, p. 164.

² "The Spiritual Register," by Thomas Wills, A.B. Vol.ii., p. 27.

Whitehaven, "about three-quarters of a year," when it is said he "returned to Ulverstone."¹ The last phrase suggests that he had been at Ulverston before going to Whitehaven, but, if so, it could only have been for a very short time. About this time the hostility manifested against the preaching of the Gospel was very great. The Rev. Mr. Johnson, of Bootle, was roughly handled when speaking at the Market Cross at Ulverston, and grievous persecution prevailed during Mr. Ellis's ministry. He left on May 24th, 1791, and is the same probably who laboured so long at Barnsley, near Sheffield, dying there in 1832. The Rev. Lewis Williams followed on the 20th of May, 1792. Along with the Rev. Daniel Gray, of Bootle, he preached the opening sermons of Providence Chapel, Whitehaven, on December 15th, 1793. He resigned in July, 1794, and was followed by the Rev. John Atkinson, on the 11th of October, 1794, who is said to have been educated with a view to exercising his ministry in the Established Church. His ordination took place on June 3rd, 1795, and an account of the service is here appended :—

On Wednesday, the 3rd of June, the Rev. John Atkinson was set apart to the pastoral office in the Independent church at Ulverstone, Lancashire. Mr. Gray, of Bootle, prayed, and read suitable portions of Scripture. Mr. Charrier, of Lancaster, engaged in the intercessory prayer, delivered a short introductory discourse, and received the confession of faith. Mr. M'Quhae, of Blackburn, engaged in the ordination prayer, and gave an excellent charge from Col. iv., 17, "*And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord that thou fulfil it.*" Mr. Grimshaw, of Forton, preached a very suitable discourse to the people from 1 Thess. ii., 12, "*Walk worthy of God, who hath called you to His kingdom and glory.*" Mr. Collins, of Kendal, concluded with prayer. Mr. Charrier preached in the evening. The attention and behaviour of the audience were highly becoming the solemn exercises of the day.²

In his time the debt was removed from the chapel. In the Parish Register is a notice of Mr. Atkinson's marriage, on June 16th, 1800, to Margaret Neale, spinster, of Ulverston. On the 12th of October, 1801, he resigned, and subsequently became President of Coward College, now New College, London.

¹ "Congregational Magazine" for 1822, p. 671.

² "Evangelical Magazine" for 1795, p. 334.

The Rev. Luke Collins was Mr. Atkinson's successor. He had previously been the Congregational minister of Horton-in-Craven, and of Lowther Street, Kendal. He left the latter place for Ulverston about 1802, where he remained until his death, on January 7th, 1805. Following him is the Rev. Samuel Barber, a student from Rotherham College. His ordination took place on January 14th, 1807, and on the 13th of February, 1809, he was married at Ulverston to Sarah Frearson, aunt to the Rev. Thomas Frearson, of Tottlebank. Shortly after this he left, having been at Ulverston for three years. He was subsequently at Bridgnorth, where he commenced an academy for young men. The Rev. Joseph Davies succeeded Mr. Barber on the 12th of September, 1809. Mr. Davies's ministry at Ulverston extended over twenty years. In addition to his duties as minister, he taught a school. The house still stands, and is in Soutergate, though it is in a somewhat dilapidated condition. A few of his pupils also survive, and for their old teacher they have only words of respect and affection. Towards the end of 1832, or beginning of 1833, Mr. Davies resigned, and the ministers of the Preston District agreed to supply the place. He died about two years afterwards, and left a considerable family. His son, the Rev. John Lahairoi Davies, was ordained to the pastoral office over the 'Tottenham and Edmonton Church, London, on the 30th of September, 1829, his father giving the charge. Upon a tablet erected in the Soutergate Chapel, is the following inscription:—

Sacred to the memory of the
REV. JOSEPH DAVIES,
Nearly 26 years minister of this chapel,
who died 4th June, 1835, aged 62 years.

To testify their respect for his memory, and to record the estimation in which he was held, a few of his friends have caused this tablet to be erected

Also of the Rev. JOHN L. DAVIES, eldest son of the above,
minister of Edmonton, near London,
who died at Ulverston, 18th May, 1832, aged 26 years.

A daughter of Mr. Davies, Anna (Mrs. Preston, widow), is now resident at Goosnargh Hospital. In 1833 the church is represented as being in a "very low state." In the early part of that

year the chapel appears to have been closed for a short time, but it was re-opened on Whit-Sunday. In February, 1834, it is said that "the congregation at Soutergate Chapel had invited the Rev. James Gregory to become their pastor, that he had agreed to supply the pulpit for three months prior to deciding on the matter, and that he had commenced his labours there on the first Sunday in February, under very encouraging circumstances."¹ At the meeting, at which this was reported, it was agreed to recommend from the Union funds the sum of £35 for Ulverston. This was the first monetary help given to the church. Mr. Gregory, who was a student from Exeter Academy, and whose early days were spent near Lancaster, though urged to assume the pastorate, did not do so, but removed to Thornton, near Bradford, where he laboured for about forty years, dying there on May 19th, 1875, at the age of seventy-two years. At the February Meeting of the year following it was said :

"Mr. Gregory's removal on accepting an invitation from Thornton, in Yorkshire, had damped the energies of the congregation, but a brighter prospect of prosperity seemed now before them. Mr. Evans, of Wharton, had recently supplied there for four Sabbaths, and had accepted an invitation to visit them for 12 months, with the particular object in view of trying to revive the drooping interest of Soutergate."²

Mr. Evans, who was a native of Aberayon, in the county of Cardigan, received his early education in the Independent College, Newton, afterwards studying at Blackburn Academy. He spent a few months at the little Congregational church at Preesall, near Fleetwood, and settled at Wharton, near Bolton, about 1833 or 1834. As already stated, towards the beginning of 1835 he removed to Ulverston for twelve months. The encouragement, however, that he met with induced him to remain as their minister when the twelve months had expired. With Mr. Evans came prosperity to the church; and early in his ministry all the different organisations are reported to be in a "flourishing condition." On the 2nd of August, 1837, he was ordained. In 1846 the church, which had received

¹ "Minutes of the Preston District" for 1834.

² "Minutes of the Preston District," February, 1835.

pecuniary assistance from the County Union, declared its intention to "request no further grant from the Union," and since that time it has remained independent. In 1852 Mr. Evans left Ulverston for Long Buckby, in Northamptonshire, commencing his labours there on Oct. 31st, where he remained for six years, and then returned to Ulverston. Whilst at Long Buckby he married Sarah, daughter of the Rev. T. Coleman, of Ashley, Northamptonshire, and author of "Memorials of the Independent Churches in Northamptonshire." His second period of ministerial service at Ulverston terminated with his death in August, 1868, after a ministry of thirty-five years, twenty-six of which were spent at Ulverston.

Portraits of this good man are to be found in many of the homes of the people, and his name is revered and beloved by them. Besides attending to the wants of his own people, he itinerated throughout the Furness District,¹ and to his labours Congregationalism in these parts is lastingly indebted. He wrote a valuable little work on "Furness and Furness Abbey," and was the author of several other minor publications. His remains lie in the graveyard of the chapel where he so long ministered, a copy of the inscription upon his tombstone being given below. Whilst Mr. Evans was at Long Buckby, from 1852 to 1858, the Rev. James Browne, B.A., was minister at Ulverston. He was trained at Homerton, entered the ministry in 1850, settling first at Debenham, Suffolk. From this place he removed to Ulverston, and in 1858 became the minister of Bamford Chapel, near Rochdale. He was next at Barnsley, in Yorkshire, resigning his charge at that place in 1875. Since that time he has been resident in Bradford without charge, and for several years has acted as Secretary to the Independent College, Airedale. During Mr. Browne's pastorate at Ulverston the organ was placed in the chapel and a debt removed of nearly

¹ In February, 1839, Mr. Evans presented a petition to the Preston District of the Lancashire Congregational Union requesting the appointment of an Itinerant for the Furness District. The field of labour sketched extended over twenty miles, and included Broughton, Ulpha, Kirkby Ireleth, Bickside, Dalton, and Barrow, and a grant of £80 was asked for from the Union funds. The petition was granted, and the Rev. J. P. Jones was appointed to the station. He continued his labours here until 1846, when the Itinerancy was given up.

£300. After the death of Mr. Evans, the pastorate remained vacant until the early part of 1870, when the Rev. J. W. Clarke began his ministry here. He was trained at Airedale College, settled first at Malton, Yorkshire, in 1868, having Ulverston as his second charge. In two years he removed to Walton, near Liverpool, was afterwards at Westgate Chapel, Burnley, and is now labouring at Queen Street, Chester. During his ministry at Ulverston a secession took place, which resulted in the formation of the Baptist Church in Fountain Street. Mr. Clarke was succeeded at Ulverston by the Rev. George Sadler, from Spring Hill College, whose ministry commenced on the 30th of March, 1873, and closed on the 25th of June, 1876, on his acceptance of a call to the church at Glossop, in Derbyshire. He has since laboured at Newcastle-under-Lyne, and is now at Ossett, in Yorkshire. It was during his time that the chapel was re-seated and decorated. On January 7th, 1877, the present minister, Rev. J. Barton Bell, began his duties here. His ministerial training was obtained at the Edinburgh Theological Hall. In 1870 he settled at Aberfeldy, Perthshire, and was afterwards at Belmont, Aberdeen, whence he removed to Ulverston. It was stated in the first part of this article that the chapel was erected in 1777.

According to an Indenture, bearing date February 13th, 1777, ground was "conveyed to James Raby, of New Barrow, in the parish of Dalton and county of Lancaster, yeoman, his heirs and assigns, with the professed design and intent that a chapel or meeting-house, with a vestry to the same, might be built and erected on some part of the same premises for divine worship by a Church or Society of Dissenters of the Independent persuasion, and that the residue thereof might be appropriated for a cemetery or burying ground for the members of the said Church and other persons usually assembling for Divine worship in the said intended Chapel or Meeting House." By Indenture dated January 16th, 1780, James Raby granted the building or edifice erected and now used as a "chapel or meeting house" to William Briggs, of Ulverston, weaver; Reginald Strickland, of Rustland, yeoman; Wm. Dawson, of Broughton, tailor; Robert Gorral, of Pennington, husbandman; William Bamber, of Larbrick, yeoman; Thomas Phillips, of Elswick, clerk; and George Burder, clerk.

Considerable difficulty was experienced in settling the provisions of the deed, and much feeling was excited, endangering thereby the little Christian society. The Rev. Jonathan Scott, already

mentioned, is a prominent figure in trying to bring about a suitable arrangement. From the minutes of the Preston District, under date February, 1839, the following extract relating to alterations in the building is taken :—

“Extensive improvements have been made in the chapel by the erection of a neat gallery for the Sabbath school children, and the enlargement of the vestry, the cost of which, nearly £40, has been defrayed by themselves, with the kind assistance of their friends and neighbours.”

Other alterations were made in 1847, when the school was erected, virtually giving to the chapel a new front. The building is situated at the north end of the town—by far the oldest part—and is in a long, narrow street called Soutergate, from which it takes its name. Its front faces the street, and is protected by a high wall. A formidable looking gate has to be passed through, and a considerable number of steps mounted before the entrance is reached. From this it will be gathered that the chapel stands high, and on rising ground is a conspicuous object for a great distance. Above the doorway is a window with diamond-shaped panes, and on each side are others of the same kind. A small tablet higher up, with date 1847, proclaims the time when the Sunday school here was erected. And just on the top is a turret, stuck on in such a way as to make one nervous, for it seems as if a strong wind would bring it down. I cannot hear that it has ever been honoured with a bell, and what purpose it is intended to serve I do not know. Viewing the chapel in front, it is not unhandsome, but from the side it appears odd. On each side of the entrance walk is the small graveyard, the one to the right containing a stone thus inscribed :—

In affectionate remembrance of the

REV. FRANCIS EVANS,

For a period of over 26 years the able and faithful Minister of this Chapel,
who died the 16th day of August, 1868, aged 55 years.

MARY MARGARET, infant daughter of the Rev. Francis and Sarah Evans,
died September 19th, 1858, aged 9 weeks.

This stone was erected by a few of his friends.

On this side the graveyard passes into a larger one behind, in which are several tombstones, though none of any age. Two doorways lead into the chapel, which are followed by two aisles that lead down to the pulpit. The pews are quite modern, all open, and made of pitchpine. The pulpit is of the platform style, and below is a small Communion pew. Over the entrance is the gallery—not very largely used—in the front of which is an old-fashioned clock—like the tower outside, just stuck on the top. In the gallery is the organ. There is a considerable number of tablets in the chapel, belonging to the Briggs, Salmon, Crewdson, and other families. The Salmons in particular seem to have played an important part in Ulverston Congregationalism. Old Thomas Salmon, who was born July 5th, 1758, at Shaw, in Cumberland, was apprenticed to Mr. Dawson, tailor, one of the first trustees of Ulverston Chapel. From his home he was accustomed to walk to Ulverston—some ten miles—to hear such Independent ministers as preached there in hired barns and factories, before the present chapel was erected. For forty-nine years he was clerk of the Independent Chapel at Ulverston, where he died May 29th, 1828, at the age of sixty-nine. His son, John Salmon, held the office of clerk after his father.

To the left going in is a door which leads up into the school-room, through which the gallery of the chapel is entered. Here are the old-fashioned, straight-backed, deep-seated pews. The door to the right leads into the infants' room, through which we pass into the graveyard on the side of the chapel. As already stated, the school was built in 1847, and put in front of the chapel. This necessitated considerable alteration. Originally the chapel must have appeared much more beautifully situated than it does to-day. The district was considerably more rural than now. A long walk from the street, part of which has been covered by the school, led up to the chapel front. On both sides of the walk, close by the wall which lines the street, were poplar trees, and to the right the graveyard. Two aisles, one on each side of the chapel and next to the wall—there being no side seats—ran up to the pulpit, which stood where the present one does, but it was a two decker. The singing pew was beneath, in which was a table, and on the top of it a curiously-constructed music stand. To the right

of the pulpit was the minister's vestry, from which a flight of steps led into the pulpit. There was no gallery, the present one, diminished by about one-half, being erected in 1839. Viewing the chapel from behind, a bend will be seen in the wall where the vestry stood. When the school was built the chapel was enlarged to that extent. Part of the wall, however, of the old chapel is still standing, but all else has disappeared. As previously stated, during Mr. Sadler's ministry, the old pews were removed, and the place was re-seated in modern style. On the last Sunday in July, 1886, the chapel was occupied for the last time previous to painting and re-decorating, on which occasion Mr. Bell preached from Psalm cxxxvi., 1, the text from which the Rev. G. Burder preached at the opening of the chapel, in July, 1778. The historic sketch to which reference has been made formed the concluding part of that sermon. On the 15th of August, 1886, the chapel was re-opened, the preacher being the Rev. J. H. Paterson, of Zion Chapel, Kendal. The collections taken fully met the outlay. The chapel, which has now quite a clean and neat appearance, is well lighted, and will seat about 400 people. It is rather oblong than square, and so like all the eighteenth century chapels, for they all, or nearly all, appear to have been built after one model. Connected with it is a manse, which has recently been greatly improved; and during Mr. Bell's ministry a debt upon both manse and chapel has been cleared off, so that the property is quite unburdened. In addition to the work carried on at Soutergate, the church has, since the latter part of Mr. Evans's ministry, done work in a poorer part of the town, in what is now known as the Mission Room, Swan Street. Since January, 1885, the premises, which previously had been held without any payment beyond working expenses, have, owing to the death of the former owner, been rented. The Sunday school meets morning and afternoon, and an afternoon service at three o'clock, is held on Sundays, in addition to other meetings held during the week. Of late, the work of the mission has been carried on with great vigour, and at present it is a very hopeful department of service. From what has been stated, it will be evident that the church has done good service, and that it is healthy and vigorous still; but, like all the old chapels, its present position makes somewhat against it, not being sufficiently central.

III.—DALTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

THE town of Dalton had once a glory which does not belong to it to-day. When Furness Abbey, which is only a little distance away, was in its pride and power, Dalton was the capital of this district, but that honour has since been given to Ulverston. "It is pleasantly situated," says Baines, "on a gentle declivity inclining to the east, in the midst of a tract of country almost unparalleled for the fertility of its soil."¹ At the higher end of the town is an ancient square tower, where the abbots formerly held their courts and prisoners were confined. Its church, also, is of considerable antiquity, and in the list of vicars who have served it is the Rev. Thomas Whitehead, ejected thence in 1662. Calamy calls him "a pious, laborious, and faithful minister, who studied to do good in his place, and preached as often as he could to his people after his ejection."² He died Februray, 1679, at the age of seventy-three. Dalton Congregationalism, however, is far away from being connected with those times; it is, indeed, little more than a quarter of a century old. It was brought from the town of Ulverston by the Rev. Francis Evans, pastor of the Congregational Church there. At the meeting of the Preston District, held in February, 1862, Mr. Evans made a statement respecting the claims of Dalton and neighbourhood upon the practical sympathy of the Union. His pleadings were effectual in securing £60 from its funds for Evangelistic work in this place. This money, however, was not appropriated for several years, as no suitable preaching place could be obtained. At the District Meeting for 1866 it was said that "last year a schoolroom was engaged of the Tenant for Sabbath services, but in the week before the Sabbath on which services were to be conducted by the Rev. J. Hamer, of Barrow, the owner of the property refused to give permission to occupy the school for such purposes."³ According to the Report for the year following, the schoolhouse had been sold, and thereby become available for public worship. This building is known as the Grammar School, and is only a short distance from the present.

¹ "History of Lancashire" (Ed. 1870). Vol. ii., p. 649.

² "Nonconformist's Memorial" (1802). Vol. ii., p. 359.

³ "Minutes of the Preston District."

place of worship. Work was actually commenced on the first Sabbath in June, 1867, when the Rev. F. Evans preached in the morning, and the Rev. W. Thornbeck, of Barrow, in the evening. A branch church, consisting of fourteen members, was formed in connection with that at Ulverston, the first meeting of which was held on July 17th, following. The Rev. R. Robinson, formerly a Primitive Methodist, became the minister, and the work of erecting a school-chapel was at once begun. This building—the foundation stone of which was laid on the 4th of November, 1868, by E. B. Dawson, Esq., of Lancaster—was completed and opened for worship March 23rd, 1869, when the Rev. E. Dothie, B.A., of Lancaster, was the preacher. It is described as built of limestone, obtained in the district, its design being Gothic. Its length is 56 feet and width 28 feet. The cost, including the land for the chapel when required, is put down at about £700, towards which the Lancashire and Cheshire Chapel Building Society promised £300. The architect was Mr. A. J. Carlisle, of Dalton. The year following a gallery capable of seating sixty persons was added, a school built 41 feet long and 27 feet wide, and fence walls enclosing the property, the additional outlay being £405. Mr. Robinson left in July, 1872, and the Rev. T. R. Davies, from Poulton-le-Fylde, was appointed his successor, beginning his ministry on the first Sunday in 1873. In 1876 he removed to Kirkham, and is now labouring at Knowle Green. In June of the same year the Rev. D. Tatton was ordained to the pastorate of this church, but he remained only about two years. The next minister was the Rev. A. Hall, who had been educated at Cavendish College, and had laboured for many years in Manchester. He began to supply at Dalton in 1878, and spent some portion of each week amongst the people, but continued to reside in Manchester. This arrangement continued until 1885, when Mr. Hall resigned, and took charge of the Congregational Church at Hollinwood, near Oldham. The Rev. C. A. Singleton, educated at Nottingham, and who had laboured in Sussex for six years, was immediately called to succeed him. Indeed, the meeting which said farewell to Mr. Hall gave the welcome to his successor. Mr. Singleton still continues his ministry here, amidst signs of steady progress. The chapel has accommodation for about 250, and as the congregation averages

200 it is often decently filled. The total membership of the church, including those of the mission stations to be mentioned presently, is about 135. In the Sunday school there are 225 scholars and twenty teachers. The grant from the Union funds is £50, considerably less than at the commencement of the interest.

In connection with Dalton are two branches. One is at Stainton—a village about two and a half miles south of Dalton, “noted for its fine limestone quarries, whence is procured the stone known as Ulverston marble.”¹ Preaching was commenced here by Mr. Robinson, the first of the Dalton ministers, in 1871, in a room lent by Mr. A. Brogden. In 1873, a new iron chapel was erected at a cost of £300, the whole of which, except about £10 for extras, is said to have been paid for shortly afterwards.² There is accommodation in the chapel for 150 people. Services are held afternoon and evening, and the congregations average about fifty. In the Sunday school are seventy-three scholars and teachers. The second preaching station is at Gleaston, a village some two or three miles yet farther south, and nearer Morecambe Bay. It consists of a few houses at the foot of a gentle slope, near to which are the mouldering ruins of Gleaston Castle, erected by the lords of Adlingham, and which is as old at least as the fourteenth century. It was during Mr. Hall’s ministry at Dalton, in 1881, that services were commenced at Gleaston. The place of meeting was an upper room, called by some “The Loft,” over the village smithy, access to which was gained by a flight of steps outside. It was about 20 feet long, 10 feet wide, and 7 feet high. It was rented at 2s. 6d. per week, and was about as uninviting a place as could be got; but it was the only one available. At the time of Mr. Singleton’s settlement the cause here was very low. The people were quite depressed and ready to give up; but prosperity soon returned, and now the station, for its size, is exceedingly interesting and encouraging. In 1887, a chapel was erected, the foundation stone of which was laid on March 2nd by R. Mansergh, Esq., of Lancaster. It was opened on the 8th of June following by the Rev. Professor Taylor, of Windermere. Its cost, including the

¹ Baines’s “History of Lancashire” (Ed. 1870). Vol. ii., p. 646.

² “Lancashire Congregational Calendar” for 1874-75.

site, was £360, and a debt of £185 remains upon the building. It has sittings for 150 people, and the average congregation is given as seventy, the number of teachers and scholars as eighty. There is service twice on a Sunday, and Mr. Singleton is assisted in his work by an earnest band of lay preachers connected with the Dalton church.

IV.—CONGREGATIONALISM AT BARROW-IN-FURNESS.

IN previous articles the three important watering places of Morecambe, Fleetwood, and Blackpool on the West Lancashire coast were given as illustrations of rapid growth in Lancashire towns. Fifty or sixty years ago they scarcely existed; but to-day their size is very considerable, whilst their name and fame may be said to have "gone out through all the earth." Barrow, however, is an even more remarkable instance still. "From a mere farmstead," says Mr. Richardson, "in 1847, it has risen to a corporate town, with between, 45,000 and 50,000 inhabitants, a growth not equalised by any other town in the kingdom in the same space of time." This was written in 1881. Its ecclesiastical history, therefore, does not go beyond these modern days. Congregationalists appear to have been the first to attempt to make religious provision for this new and growing town. The Rev. Francis Evans, Congregational minister at Ulverston from 1835 to 1852, was accustomed to itinerate in the Furness District; and at a meeting of the Preston District of the Congregational Union in February, 1851, a letter from him was read "soliciting a grant towards the evangelisation of Furness." It was out of these itinerant labours of the Ulverston minister that Barrow Congregationalism grew. Barrow is first mentioned in the Union Report for 1856, where it is said:—

The increasing population and growing importance of the town of Barrow gave an additional force to their appeals, and a large grant was made at the last annual meeting for the purpose of commencing operations. As yet,

¹ "History of Barrow." (Introduction.)

however, the committee have not been successful in their attempts to obtain an agent possessed of the necessary qualifications for the work, which is one of some delicacy and difficulty. The operations of the friends have been restricted also by want of a suitable preaching room at Barrow. It is hoped, however, that this will soon be removed. Some subscriptions have been obtained and plans made for a chapel and schoolhouse, and it is intended soon to proceed with the erection.

The Rev. James Browne, B.A., who succeeded Mr. Evans at Ulverston according to the next Report, took "a lively interest in the undertaking" at Barrow, and as often as he had the opportunity preached there, and "devoted his best efforts to the advancement of the work." From the Preston District minutes, dated February, 1857, I extract the following interesting passage :—

A letter from the Rev. Jas. Browne, of Ulverston, stated the population at 2,000. A chapel was in course of erection, capable of holding 200. There is a congregation of fifty adults and 25 scholars. Mr. Browne further stated that the great want was a suitable agent on the spot, and that with the grant from the union there would be no difficulty in supporting him. The population had increased fourfold since 1851. There are often as many as 300 vessels in the harbour.

The chapel referred to was erected in 1857, upon land given by the Duke of Devonshire, in Hindpool Road. It was 38 feet long by 21 feet wide inside, and 30 feet in height to the apex of the roof. It had sitting accommodation for 150 people, and cost about 400 guineas.

The first minister of this new interest was the Rev. James Hamer. He was born at Horwich, near Bolton, in 1802, and attended Mawdsley Street Congregational Chapel, in Bolton. He studied for the ministry for about twelve months under the Rev. Walter Scott, of Rothwell, Northamptonshire, and then went to Highbury College. Leaving there in 1833, he settled at Sutton Valence, in Kent, where he remained for nearly a quarter of a century. He began his ministry at Barrow on the first Sunday in 1858, and soon after his settlement a church of ten members was formed. The rapid growth of the population and consequent increase in the congregation soon showed that the chapel was too small, and that an enlargement was necessary. Instead, however, of extending the building which had only done duty a few years, it

was resolved to erect a new one. The foundation stone of this was laid on the 3rd of October, 1862, by E. B. Dawson, Esq., of Lancaster, prayer being offered by the Rev. G. W. Clapham, of Preston, and the Pastor addressed the audience. Whilst the chapel was being built the congregation assembled in the Temperance Hall. The new building, which stands upon the site of the former one, and is one of the Bicentenary Memorial Chapels, was opened for worship on November 16th, 1863, by the Rev. Dr. Mellor, then of Liverpool. Its cost was about £1,850. It has accommodation for over 500 persons, and by the addition of side galleries can be made to seat 200 more. The schoolroom is underneath. Mr. W. F. Poulton, of Reading, was the architect, and the contractor was Mr. William Gradwell, of Barrow. A debt of about £400 remained upon the building when it was opened. The Report for 1866 states that the "chapel is nearly paid for," and also that "such had been the prosperity attained at Barrow that further assistance from your funds is not requested." In August of that year Mr. Hamer felt constrained through declining health to resign his charge. He continued, however, to reside in the town and worship with his old congregation until his death, which took place on July 28th, 1873. His remains were laid in the Dalton Cemetery. In June, 1867, the Rev. William Thornbeck, of Glasgow University, was ordained to the pastorate as Mr. Hamer's successor. He continued only until the end of 1868, beginning his ministry at Great Harwood, near Blackburn, on January 26th, 1869, where he remained until May, 1871. He laboured afterwards for several years at Marsden, in Yorkshire. In May, 1869, the Rev. W. H. Fothergill, from Nottingham Institute, who had previously laboured for about twelve months at Melbourne, in Derbyshire, was "called" to the vacant pastorate, and commenced his labours on the 21st of June following. The chapel became inconveniently crowded, and an enlargement again seemed to be necessary. In 1873, services began to be held in the Town Hall, out of which grew the second Congregational Church, in Ainslie Street, to be noticed presently. Mr. Fothergill accepted an invitation from the new church, and anything further about him will come more appropriately in the account of it. The Rev. William Paterson, from Glasgow University, was the next minister. He

was ordained here on the 28th of October, 1874, and preached his farewell sermon here on March 24th, 1878. He went to London, where he remained about three years, and is now at Newcastleton, E. U. Church, not far from the Border. The Rev. E. Storr, from Armagh, succeeded Mr. Paterson in June, 1879, but resigned through impaired health in the following January. The present minister, the Rev. J. McMillan, who was educated at Nottingham Institute, and began ministerial work in 1873, at Blackford Bridge, Bury, entered upon his pastorate at Barrow in August, 1880. The chapel is lofty, light, and easy to speak in. The pews are all open. The pulpit is of the platform style, and is in a recess, where are also the choir. Some ten years ago it was thoroughly beautified, at considerable expense, and must then have looked very handsome. In the school are some 200 scholars. The membership of the church is 150.

In continuing the story of Congregationalism at Barrow we have now to sketch the course of the Abbey Road Congregational Church. As stated in the previous article, it originated during Mr. Fothergill's ministry at Hindpool Road, through the overgrowth of the church there. In the "Lancashire Congregational Calendar" for 1875-6, there is the following account of the matter :

The chapel in Hindpool Road having been for some time past filled, the Rev. W. H. Fothergill and some of his friends resolved to undertake the work of founding a second Church. For this purpose the Town Hall was rented, and a Pastor was chosen to take the oversight of the Parent Church. A congregation, averaging one hundred and twenty on the Sabbath morning, and two hundred and ninety on the Sabbath evening, has been collected. There is a church of forty-four members, and a Sunday school of twenty teachers and one hundred and sixty-three scholars. An eligible site for a new Chapel has been secured, at a cost of £700, which sum has been raised by a bazaar, &c. Much of the thought and energy of Pastor and people will of necessity be given to the business of erecting a new place of worship. In the meantime the Executive Committee recommend a grant of £100 a year.

About this time Barrow was in a highly prosperous condition, not a house in it being to let. The Calendar for the year following states that the people "have raised a structure which includes a large assembly-room with gallery, which will seat over 400 persons ; (this is used for public worship); a lecture-room, infants' room, and

nine classrooms; the cost has been £2,500." Two or three years afterwards a heavy commercial depression settled upon the town. Whereas in 1875 not a house could be found in Barrow unoccupied, in 1877 more than 13,000 people had left the town and 1,000 dwellings were standing empty. As may be expected, the new interest suffered seriously. The building was erected and opened, but a burdensome debt rested upon it. Mr. Fothergill refused a tempting offer to another sphere at this time, sinking "all considerations other than the prosperity of the cause at Barrow." In March, 1878, however, he accepted a call to Heywood, where he laboured successfully until sickness laid him aside, and eventually led to his resignation at the end of July, 1885. He was for some months without charge, but is now at Middleton, near Oldham. His successor at Barrow was the Rev. Matthew Braithwaite. He was a native of Hull, and attended the church there of which the Rev. Newman Hall, LL.B., was pastor. He was educated for the ministry at Cavendish College, Manchester, by the Rev. Dr. Parker, the offspring of which is the present Congregational Institute at Nottingham. Mr. Braithwaite began his ministry in 1862, at Theddingworth, Leicestershire, where he remained about eleven years, removing to Uppingham, in Rutlandshire. His next settlement was Burslem, in Staffordshire. From this place he removed to Barrow in 1879. The Calendar for that year states that "since his settlement improvement has been manifest," but there is "still a debt of £2,250 upon the building, and the continued depression of trade forbids the hope of any immediate lessening of this burden." Towards the end of 1880 Mr. Braithwaite resigned his charge at Barrow, and in March, 1881, he entered upon his duties as the first pastor of the newly-formed interest at Hollins Grove, Darwen. The prospect of a happy and successful ministry there was suddenly ended by his death, November 22nd, 1882, at the early age of forty-six years. The Rev. James Haigh, from Lancashire College, followed Mr. Braithwaite at Barrow in 1881. The Calendar for 1884 tells of the removal of the heavy debt, which had been so long a serious hindrance to the work here. The Church Secretary, writing therein, says:—

"At the commencement of the year the debt on our building

stood at no less than £1,868, and now I am glad to say, owing chiefly to the almost superhuman efforts of our beloved pastor, the Rev. James Haigh, the entire liability, together with a street-making account of £105, has been removed."

In September, 1886, Mr. Haigh accepted a call to Nether Chapel, Sheffield, where he still labours. The Calendar for the year following states that "continued depression in trade" had made the work of this station suffer considerably, yet in the spring of last year the building was thoroughly cleaned, painted, and decorated at an expense of about £40; but this amount, together with arrears in current account, due at the end of 1885, had been extinguished by subscriptions, a sale of work, and a Christmas tree, and the treasurer was in the happy position, for the first time in the history of the church, of having a balance in hand. It also says that the church had decided to ask no further help from the Union funds. The Rev. T. A. Leonard, who was trained at the Congregational Institute, Nottingham, began his ministry at Barrow in August, 1887, and removed to Colne in July of this year. The building is credited in the Calendar with sitting accommodation for 350. It stands a little off Abbey Road, in Ainslie Street, is on rising ground, and at a convenient distance from Hindpool Road. There is a large plot of ground on the main road, which has been secured for a new chapel at some future time, when the prosperity of former years again visits the town.



AMONG THE FELS.

CHAPTER VI.

WESTMORLAND NONCONFORMITY.



WESTMORLAND Congregationalism has all along been supported, and is so still, largely by the Lancashire Congregational Union. Some account, therefore, of it will not be inappropriate in a work dealing with the Nonconformity of the larger and more important sister county of Lancashire. There are smaller counties in the Midlands and South of England than Westmorland, but in the North it stands least "among the thousands of Judah." It is touched or bounded by four counties, viz., Durham, Cumberland, Lancashire, and Yorkshire. It is not half the size of Lancashire, whilst its population (68,184 in 1881) is not more than would fill a good-sized Lancashire town. Its towns are small and old-fashioned, its villages straggling and scattered, its railways (except at the south or Lancashire end) few, and the stations far between. The "iron horse," after leaving Kendal, tears away through Lowgill, Tebay, and Shap in its journey North, unwilling to stay an unnecessary moment in this wild country. For wild it is in many respects: its sparse population suggests as much. Its eastern boundary consists of one mass of Fells, which are continued in a southerly direction until they pass into the great Yorkshire hills of Wharfedale, Ingleborough, and Pen-y-Ghent. The western half of the county is one great mountain forest, which finds its glory in Skiddaw, Saddleback, Scafell, and Conistone; whilst a hundred becks and rivulets run sparkling down its valleys. But it may be called the land of lakes as well as of mountains. It divides with Lancashire the honour of owning Windermere—the greatest of the English lakes—with Cumberland that of Ullswater, the next in point of size, and more centrally situated will be found a few others of a smaller kind which belong exclusively unto it. The whole country is charming, the scenery quite varied, though the bold and romantic

predominate, and so it receives a good share of attention each year from visitors all over England. It is rich in antiquities, too; whilst weird stories still cluster around its mountains, and strange superstitions linger in its valleys. Nonconformity has never been strong in the county. Its churches have always been few in number and small in size, and still are so; but its history goes back to the times of the ejection and is not without interest. That history is now to be given, and it will be proper that we should begin with the Unitarian Chapel in Kendal.

I.—KENDAL UNITARIAN CHAPEL.

Kendal—the town in the Kent Valley—is the largest and most important town in Westmorland. It is built of white mountain limestone, and retains as few towns do its quaint and ancient look. Wordsworth says :

A struggling burgh, of ancient charter proud,
And dignified by battlements and towers
Of a stern castle, mouldering on the brow
Of a green hill.

That “stern castle,” once the residence of the Barons of Kendal, is still “mouldering on the brow,” though little is now left; and the town nestles at the foot, undisturbed by the restless modernising spirit which has wrought such transformations elsewhere. “Bits of old Kendal” would be a misnomer, for nearly all is old, and some fine Elizabethan structures are still in a capital state of preservation. One main street, called Stricklandgate, runs through the town, on each side of which lie the courts, yards, and smaller streets, most of which are blind at one end.

Kendal Nonconformity doubtless originated with the Rev. Richard Frankland. This excellent man was born in the year 1630 at Rathmell, in the parish of Giggleswick. At the age of seventeen he proceeded to Cambridge University, graduated Master of Arts, and had there as fellow-student Oliver Heywood. “On leaving the University,” writes one, “he appears for a time to have led the unsettled and somewhat anxious life which often awaited the young

levite ; now helping some aged minister, now doing duty as a domestic chaplain.”¹ Calamy says he was ordained on September 14th, 1653, when he would be twenty-three years of age. Eventually he was preferred to the living of St. Andrew’s, Auckland, in the county of Durham, by Sir Arthur Haslerigg, a noted Republican, and one of the five members of Parliament whom King Charles sought to arrest. In 1657 Oliver Cromwell “issued a patent of endowment, appropriating certain Church lands, the Castle, and some of the cathedral buildings, to the use of a College at Durham.”² Mr. Frankland was appointed tutor ; but Cromwell’s death shortly afterwards, and the Restoration of Charles II. to the throne, put an end to its existence. The Act of Uniformity in 1662 led also to Mr. Frankland’s ejection from St. Andrew’s, and he retired to Rathmell, his native place. Here he began afresh his career as a theological tutor, being persuaded to “set up a private academy in his own house” by Sir Thomas Liddell, of Ravensworth Castle, Durham. His son, George Liddell, stands first in the list of Mr. Frankland’s students, being admitted March 8th, 1669. A singular story, which illustrates the stern stuff of which these ejected ministers were made, is preserved by Thoresby (MSS. British Museum), and as it probably belongs to this period of Mr. Frankland’s life it may be inserted here :—

Mr. Frankland’s, the N. C. minister, his going to King Charles II.—Himself told me [Dr. Henry Sampson] that he had a violent impulse upon his mind to go to the King ; that he could neither study nor do anything else for several days ; that he took up a resolution that he would go to him. He acquainted some with it, who spent some time in prayer, as himself also did at other times. He wrote down what he intended to say to him, thinking it too adventurous to speak to a King extempore, or what presence of mind he might then have ; so he goes to the old Earl of Manchester, Lord Chamberleyne, who used him very friendly, and desired him that he would bring him to speak to the King. The Earl would fain have known what he would say to him, but he would not tell him. The Earl appoints him a place to stand at, which the King was to passe by to the Councell. When the King came out, “That’s the man,” said the Earle, “would speak to your Majesty.” The King asked him, “Would you speak with me ?” “Yes,” saith he, “but in private.” So the King stept aside from the nobility that followed. Then

¹ “Christian Reformer” for 1862, p. 5.

² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

said Mr. Frankland, "The Eternal God, whose I am and whom I serve, commands you to reform your life, your family, your kingdom, and the Church; if you do not, then are such judgments of God impending (at which words he grew pale and chang'd countenance) that wil destroy both you and the kingdom." "I wil," saith the King, "do what I can. Mr. Fr. repeated this later part, and added, "I know the wrath of a King is as the roaring of a lyon; but for the sake of your soul I have taken up this speech, and leave it with you." The King hasted away, saying, "I thank you, sir;," and, twice looking back before he went into the Counsel-chamber, said, "I thank you, Sir,—I thank you." But he said and did not.

Whilst his fellow Nonconformists were suffering throughout the country he did not escape. He was called before the legal tribunal repeatedly, excommunicated, and eventually obliged to leave Rathmell. In 1674 he removed to Natland, about two miles from Kendal, "upon a call from a Christian society there." The ancient Episcopal Church here had fallen into ruins, and as there was no endowment and no resident clergyman, Mr. Frankland enjoyed a longer period of quiet than might otherwise have been granted him. Calamy says that here he preached in his own house, also at Kendal and several other places, besides continuing his work of educating young men for the ministry. The enforcement of the Five Mile Act eventually drove him away from Kendal. He sought shelter successively at Calton in Craven, Dawsonfold in Crosthwaite, Hartborough in Lancashire, Attercliffe, near Sheffield, and at last went again to his own house at Rathmell. "In these parts," says Calamy, "he had a thriving congregation, whom he kept in peace by his candour and humility, gravity and piety, notwithstanding their different principles; and he was generally beloved and exceedingly useful."¹ At these different places he also continued his tutorial labours, and more than 300 young men were educated for the ministry and other positions in life. To the close of his life Mr. Frankland appears to have been harassed by his persecutors. In the Northowram Register is the following notice of his death and burial:—

Mr. Richard Frankland, of Rauthmel, in Craven, dyed Oct. 1, buried at Giggleswick, Oct. 5, 1698, aged 62.²

¹ "Nonconformist's Memorial" (1802). Vol. ii., p. 179.

² P. 94.

It has already been stated that Mr. Frankland during his residence at Natland preached at Kendal. The date of his leaving here was about 1683, and within a few years of that time there was a Nonconformist Society in Kendal. At any rate, the earliest Baptismal Register belonging to the Unitarian Chapel there begins in 1687. Where they worshipped is not known, as the present chapel was not erected until about thirty years after. The first known minister here was the Rev. William Pendlebury, M.A., son of the Rev. Henry Pendlebury, M.A., ejected from Holcombe, in Lancashire. He was trained in part by Mr. Frankland, and in part by Mr. Chorlton, of Manchester. Probably he also studied at one of the Scotch Universities, gaining his degree there. The date of his settlement at Kendal has not been ascertained, but on the 16th of June, 1702, he and some others were ordained at Warrington, and Matthew Henry, in his diary, describes him as of "Kendal, in Westmorland." He removed to Mill Hill, Leeds, and died at Bath, September 23, 1729. The Northowram Register says:—"A Worthy, Useful man, a great loss to his family, Congregation, & the Church of God." His first wife was Mary, the second daughter of Ralph Worsley, Esq., of Platt, who died November 12, 1710, aged thirty-eight, and his second wife Ann, daughter of Thomas Fenton, of Hunslet, near Leeds. The Rev. Samuel Audland was probably his immediate successor at Kendal. He was one of Mr. Frankland's students, and went to the Rev. John Chorlton's academy at Manchester on the death of Mr. Frankland to complete his education. He left the academy in 1699, and in 1708 appears as the minister at Penruddock, in Cumberland. He died at Kendal on October 24th, 1714, and was interred in the parish church there. In 1708 he published a funeral sermon in memory of Mr. John Noble, one of the deacons of the Penruddock Church. This sermon was reprinted by one of Mr. Noble's descendants in 1820. His successor at Kendal was Doctor Caleb Rotheram. His ministerial training was received from Dr. Thomas Dixon, of Whitehaven, afterwards of Bolton, and he settled at Kendal in 1716. It was during his ministry, in the year 1720, that the chapel was erected on the east side of the Market Place. This, it is said, was once the resort of numerous

¹ P. 304.

carriers, who transported the merchandise of Old Kirkby Kendal, and upon it extensive stabling stood. A few years ago a draw well was discovered on the west side of the chapel. The funds for the building were raised by voluntary subscriptions and the sale of a number of seats, which long continued to be private property. From an old minute book the following items are extracted :— Collected in Kendal, £166 17s. 6d.; sale of seats, £94 10s.; assistance received from brethren abroad, £132 14s. 4d. Like Mr. Frankland, Dr. Rotheram conducted an academy at Kendal, wherein some fifty-six students were educated by him, some of them becoming eminent Nonconformist ministers. He had several children, one of whom, John Rotheram, M.D., became an eminent physician in Newcastle, and another, C. Rotheram, succeeded him in the ministry at Kendal. Dr. Rotheram died at Hexham, June 8th, 1752, aged fifty-nine years, having gone thither to consult his son, Dr. John Rotheram. He was interred in the old Abbey Church of Hexham, where a fine marble tablet perpetuates his memory. Nor was he forgotten by his congregation at Kendal. They erected for him a large memorial stone in the chapel-yard, which states that he was “the esteemed minister” of the congregation for thirty-six years. His funeral sermon, by one of his pupils (the Rev. James Daye, of Lancaster), was preached on June 14th, 1752, and afterwards published under the title of “The Christian’s Service, completed with Honour,” the text being John xvii., 4-5. As already stated, Dr. Rotheram was succeeded by his son, the Rev. Caleb Rotheram. He was born at Kendal on November 1st, 1736, educated in part at his father’s academy, going to Daventry on his death and the dissolution of the Kendal academy. He was ordained at Kendal on the 26th of August, 1756, when the Rev. S. Lowthion, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, preached the sermon from Acts ii., 29. This also was published at the “unanimous request of the ministers and people who heard it,” and was entitled, “The Reasonableness and Advantage of allowing Ministers to deliver their Sentiments with Freedom.” It was during his ministry, in 1777, that the parsonage was erected, its front, of dressed limestone, being a marked feature in the east end of the Market Place. Mr. Rotheram remained at Kendal until his death, January 30th, 1796, at the age of sixty years, having been forty-two years minister here.

He was twice married ; his first wife, Dorothy, died at Kendal, September 28th, 1770, aged thirty-seven ; and his second, Hannah, at Liverpool, May 14th, 1820, aged sixty-two. His successor was the Rev. John Harrison, from Lancaster. His ministrations continued from 1796 until his death in 1833. In the graveyard of the chapel is a tombstone thus inscribed :—

Beneath this stone lie the remains of the

REV. JOHN HARRISON,

Who died May 6th, 1833, aged 72 years.

During 37 years he was the eloquent and admired preacher of the gospel at this chapel, and, like his predecessors, he was a strenuous and consistent advocate of Christian liberty.

His wife, Alice, died August 4th, 1832, aged seventy-seven years.

During the ministry of Mr. Harrison an important accession to his people took place. The Rev. James Kay, one of the ministers of the Lowther Street Congregational Church, having left that church, began business as a dealer in earthenware in Strickland-gate. Shortly afterwards he commenced a new cause under the name of Unitarian Baptists, or “dippers.” They met for worship in a room now used by the Kendal Guardians, and their ablutions were performed in the summer time early on Sunday mornings in the river Kent and Anchorites’ Well. Mr. Kay left Kendal for America about the year 1820, and his Society joined the Unitarians in the Market Place. A successor to Mr. Harrison was found in the Rev. E. Hawkes, M.A., who began his ministry at Kendal in June, 1833. On the 24th of June, 1835, he married Jane, the daughter of John Greenhow, of Kendal. During his ministry the chapel was re-roofed, the walls stone finished, and an organ purchased which had been in use in the old Roman Catholic Church. Mr. Hawkes continued to labour here until his death, which occurred on the 15th of January, 1866. He was interred in the Castle Street Cemetery, and was succeeded by the Rev. J. E. Odgers, M.A., from the Manchester New College. He resigned October 6, 1868, and was for many years principal of the Unitarian Home Missionary College at Manchester, and is now at Altrincham in Cheshire. The Rev. John Russell was appointed minister on

the 1st of November, 1867, and resigned April 5th, 1874. His successor was the Rev. William Birks, who was trained at the Home Missionary Board, Manchester. He removed to Banbury, and is now at Sunderland. The Rev. James Macdonald, from the same college, succeeded Mr. Birks at Kendal. It was during his ministry, in 1881, that the chapel was renovated and the new school, at the east side of the chapel, erected, at a cost of over £500, the foundation stone being laid by Miss Greenhow, on March 10th, 1882. Mr. Macdonald is now minister of the old Dissenting interest at Gloucester. The present minister is the Rev. H. V. Miles, who was educated at the Manchester Home Missionary Board. The chapel "stands at the east side of the Market Place in quiet seclusion, approached by an arched gateway, which is connected with the parsonage-house."¹ It was built in 1720, and is still quite ancient looking, the walls being those of the original structure. A large graveyard is in front, where the tombstones of the Rotherams are conspicuous. On the two downspouts in the chapel front are respectively A.D. 1720 and A.G. The building will accommodate some 200 persons, and has a considerable endowment. The congregation is Unitarian, and has been so probably since the latter days of Dr. Rotheram.

II.—CONGREGATIONALISM IN KENDAL.

IN April, 1763, a petition was presented to the Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh, "praying that ministers might be sent from Scotland to preach the Gospel in Kendal."² The petitioners, numbering thirty-one, from in and around Kendal, had formerly attended the old chapel in the Market Place, but on the appearance of Unitarianism they seceded and took the course just indicated. Their request was granted, a chapel built upon Beast Banks, and the Rev. James McQuhae ordained minister over them in 1764. It was from this body that the Independents sprang, and it

¹ Nicholson's "Annals of Kendal," p. 163.

² "Reminiscences of the United Presbyterian Church of Kendal," by the Rev. John Inglis. p. 6.

came about in this way. Mr. McQuhae, who is said to have been far in advance of his time in his "liberality of sentiment," having taken part in the ordination of an Independent minister, "rendered himself liable to the censure of the Synod in Scotland." Refusing to submit to this ordeal, he embraced the Independent or Congregational form of Church government. He thought to continue his ministrations to his flock, but three of the trustees and some of the members determined to abide by the Presbyterian form of government and to eject him. The matter ended with a sort of compromise, Mr. McQuhae and his party taking away with them £100. The date of this secession, by several writers on Kendal Nonconformity, is given as 1772. It was probably a little earlier, and Mr. McQuhae appears to have remained only a short time, for in the Church Book of the old Independent Chapel, Tockholes, near Blackburn, he is named as minister of that place in 1771. In 1777 he removed to Blackburn, taking with him a good share of his congregation to originate Independency in that town. Chapel Street Chapel was built for him, and at this place he laboured until his death on the 29th of April, 1804, in the sixty-second year of his age. In addition to his ministerial duties, he educated several young men for the ministry. The party who seceded with Mr. McQuhae met for worship in the first instance in an old building in Stricklandgate, adjoining the Seven Stars Inn. Whether the services here were continuous or not I cannot say, but on the 9th of June, 1778, the Rev. G. Burder, who had recently settled at Lancaster, met the Rev. D. Gibbons, for many years minister at Ulverston, at Kendal, and together they took an old playhouse for a year. It was opened in the month of July following, Mr. Burder preaching from Gen. xxviii., 19. This was the old theatre, now the Working Men's Institute, at the corner of the Market Place. On Lord's Day evening, November 21st, of the same year, Mr. Burder again preached here, and there was such a crowded congregation that he found considerable difficulty in getting to the pulpit. The Rev. Thomas Hervey, a poor clergyman, of Underbarrow, cleared the way for him, saying that "if they did not make room they would have no sermon."¹ Mr. Burder states that of this good man can be recorded what rarely happens to any preacher—he converted

¹ "Memoirs of the Rev. G. Burder," p. 83.

the whole of his congregation—but that congregation consisted only of a solitary man, by whose side he sat down “inside the rails of the Communion table,” where he enlightened him in the things of religion. In 1781 a new chapel was erected in Lowther Street—then called New Street. Mr. Burder thus writes in his diary respecting this event:—

“Sept. 12 [1781]. The Lord having greatly prospered our attempts at Kendal, a new and spacious chapel, capable of seating 400 persons, without galleries, was opened this day, to my great joy. Mr. Gibbons preached in the morning, I in the afternoon, and Mr. Hunt in the evening.”¹

The sum of money secured by the seceders from the Presbyterians is said to have been used in the erection of this building. Respecting the earliest ministers of Lowther Street there is considerable uncertainty. The first known was the Rev. James Kenworthy, who was designed originally for “holy orders,” but who became a Dissenter from conviction. He was trained at Heckmondwike, and ordained at Kendal, August 16th, 1783, the charge being given to him by the Rev. James McQuhae from 2 Timothy iv., 1, 2, 5; that to the people by the Rev. Wm. Moorhouse, of Huddersfield, from Hebrews xiii., 17. He remained only a short time, and was afterwards at Stepney Chapel, Warrington. From this place he removed to Horwich New Chapel, in 1797, where he laboured until 1825, when he resigned, having reached the age of seventy-seven. He was interred at New Chapel, and upon his tombstone is this inscription:—

In memory of the
Rev. JAMES KENWORTHY,
Who died the 16th June, 1828, aged 80 years, 27 of which he was minister
of the adjoining chapel.

The Rev. Mr. Houlton is mentioned as the next minister at Kendal. He married, on January 31st, 1787, the daughter of the Rev. James Bakewell Wildbore, for many years Congregational minister at Falmouth. In the list of students educated at Lady

¹ P. 103.

Huntingdon's College, Trevecca, appears a Mr. Gray, who is given as settling at Kendal, but of him I have no information.¹ The next known minister was the Rev. Francis Rattray. He was born in 1748, at Glasgow, and educated in the University there. On the 1st of October, 1776, he was licensed by the Associate Presbytery of that city as a preacher. In 1789 he was induced to visit some parts of the North of England, and amongst other places came to Kendal where he was engaged to supply the pulpit of Lowther Street for twelve months. His literary attainments won for him attention and admiration outside his denomination. It is said that a Kendal clergyman once applied to him for a sermon appropriate for a National Thanksgiving in the reign of George III. The newspapers highly eulogised the loyalty and patriotism of the Episcopalian preacher, ignorant of the fact that his sermon was the production of a Nonconformist. He removed after a brief period to Mixenden, in Yorkshire, and thence to Howard Street Chapel, Sheffield. His last charge was Blennerhasset, in Cumberland, where he laboured until his death, on the 22nd of October, 1806. The Rev. Thomas Gritton was Mr. Rattray's successor at Kendal. He was born in London, December 30, 1756, and educated at the Mile End Academy. He settled first at Kilsby, in Northamptonshire, where he was ordained. From this place he removed to Pickering, in Yorkshire, about 1791, and thence after a few years to Kendal. He remained only some two years, leaving for Keswick, where he continued his ministrations until his death, on the 28th of February, 1828. The Rev. Luke Collins stands next on the ministerial roll. He was married at Kendal Church on the 16th of December, 1801, to Miss Frances Best, of that town. He had previously laboured at Horton-in-Craven, and shortly after his marriage he left for Ulverston. Here he remained until his death on January 7th, 1805. "An affectionate and repeated call to a destitute church at Kendal"² was given to the Rev. T. Burton, of Rotherham College. It was not, however, accepted, and he exercised a brief but useful ministry at Holmfirth. His fellow

¹ The Rev. Daniel Gray, from this college, was for many years minister at Bootle, in Cumberland, but whether he had been previously settled at Kendal is not known.

² "Evangelical Magazine" for 1802. p. 425.

student, the Rev. James Kay, accepted the invitation of the Kendal people. His ordination to the pastorate here took place on July 29th, 1801, when the Revs. B. Sugden, of Skipton; C. Ely, of Bury; J. Grimshaw, of Forton; J. Cockin, of Halifax; and P. S. Charrier, of Lancaster, conducted the service. In October of that year the loyal town of Kendal joined in the general rejoicing consequent upon the termination of war with France. The "fine Gothic window of the church was splendidly illuminated, and in front of the Independent Chapel there was an elegant transparency hung, bearing this inscription—"Peace with France." Mr. Kay's secession from the Congregationalists and formation of the Unitarian-Baptist cause in Kendal were noticed in the preceding article. The Rev. Robert Maclean was the next minister. He was trained by the Rev. Wm. Roby, of Manchester, and was ordained at Kendal on February 21, 1810. The Rev. E. Parsons, of Leeds, gave the introductory discourse; the Rev. Wm. Roby, of Manchester, the ordination prayer and charge to the minister; and the Rev. P. S. Charrier, then at Liverpool, preached to the people. Mr. Maclean left Kendal for North America, but subsequently returned to England, having pastorates at Liverpool, Stone, and Nantwich. He was followed by the Rev. Wm. Colefax, from the Idle Academy. His stay was short, removing to Hexham, thence to Pudsey, where he laboured for many years. The Rev. John Jefferson succeeded Mr. Colefax in 1822. He was educated at Rotherham, and settled first at Wakefield in 1819, where he was ordained. He remained at Kendal only until 1825. His next charge was at Andover, whence he removed to Stoke Newington. His ministry here extended over thirty-seven years. He resigned in June, 1867, and died on May 19th, 1882, in the eighty-seventh year of his age. He was the author of several small works of a religious character. The Rev. David Jones, educated at Airedale, and who had laboured about six years at Monkswearmouth, followed Mr. Jefferson at Kendal in 1826. His ministry is by far the longest which the church has known, extending over a quarter of a century. On the retirement of Mr. Jones, in 1861, help was sought from the County Union. The minutes of the Preston District meeting for February, 1862, state that a sum of £100 should be asked from the funds of the Union for Kendal, on con-

dition that the church there be dissolved. This was done, and in September, 1862, the Rev. Wm. Nicholls, from Lancashire College, began his ministry here. The arrangement was that he should have charge of the place for six months. At the end of this time he was re-invited, and the invitation was accepted. Shortly after this an announcement was made from the pulpit that all who wished to become members of a church should send a written request to that effect to the pastor. The result was the re-formation of the church. Mr. Nicholls concluded his ministry here in the summer of 1867. In 1869 he became pastor of the old Congregational Church at Ravenstonedale, remaining there until 1883, when he removed to Blackford Bridge, near Bury, where he still labours. A little while previous to the removal of Mr. Nicholls the church at Kendal had resolved upon doing without further assistance from the Union. In 1867 the Rev. John Peill, who had been educated at Glasgow University, accepted the vacant pastorate. He remained until 1874, when he removed to Dukinfield Old Hall. He is now pastor of Mold Green Congregational Church, near Huddersfield. His successor was the Rev. W. Burrows, B.A., in 1875. He was educated at Lancashire College, and had laboured at Upper Mill, Saddleworth, for fourteen years. In 1881 Mr. Burrows left Kendal and entered the Established Church. He was followed in the same year by the Rev. H. W. Mote, who was trained for the ministry at Hackney, and had previously held pastorates at Mitcham, in Surrey, and Brampton, in Cumberland. In December, 1882, the church celebrated its Centenary. Mr. Mote left in 1884, and laboured at Westhoughton from 1885 to 1888. He is now minister of a Congregational Church at Henham, in Essex. The Rev. W. Hudson, of Forton, began his ministry at Kendal in April, 1885. He resigned a few months ago, and the church is at present vacant. The chapel stands in Lowther Street, from which it takes its name. It is a tall, plain, substantial building, and is capable of accommodating about 350 persons. The walls are the original ones, but in 1828 the building was new fronted. Internally there have been considerable alterations since its erection a century ago. In 1815 the sum of £209 11s. 11½d. was subscribed towards "altering the seats and erecting a gallery in the chapel." During Mr. Hudson's ministry the place was completely renovated, the old

straight-backed pews being removed for the more comfortable ones now in use, which are all open and made of pitch pine. The gallery alone, which is over the entrance, remains unchanged. There is a small organ in the chapel, and altogether the building is as neat, light, and commodious as one could desire. The Sunday school adjoining is a much lower building. It originated in 1789, only nine years after Robert Raikes founded the Sunday school system, and was probably the first in Kendal. The Centenary services of this institution were held on Sunday, June 30th, 1889, when the Rev. B. Nightingale, of Preston, was the officiating minister.

A concluding sentence must be given to Zion Church, which is in New Inn Yard, Highgate. It originated with a secession from the United Presbyterian Church in Woolpack Yard, when the late Dr. John Guthrie was minister. He being suspected of holding views which are now known as "Morisonian," was removed from the Presbyterian Church in 1843. With him went 100 out of 130 members of the congregation for whom Zion Chapel was erected in 1844. It was opened October 16th, and cost £1,250. Dr. Guthrie continued to be minister here until November, 1846, when he removed to Glasgow, and the Rev. William Taylor, now Professor Taylor, Windermere, was called to succeed him. Mr. Taylor was ordained to the pastorate of the church on the 10th day of October, 1849, and under him it so prospered that first new galleries had to be put in, and next the chapel enlarged to double its size. In March, 1880, Professor Taylor resigned, and in August of the same year the Rev. Joseph Hall became pastor of the congregation. Mr. Hall closed his ministry in Kendal on the last Sunday in September, 1885. For the next nine months the church was vacant, but on the first Sunday in July, 1886, the present minister, the Rev. J. Hamilton Paterson, assumed the oversight. The present building is seated for about 800, and the membership at the close of 1888 was 285. It is not connected with the Lancashire Congregational Union, though it finds a place in its Calendar and also in the Congregational Year Book.

III.—STANTON AND CROOK.

THESE two villages are nearly equidistant from Kendal, but in almost opposite directions. Stanton is about five miles south of the town, and so on the Lancashire side ; Crook about four to the north-west. From Kendal it is a good stiff walk to either place, but most charming—especially the one to Crook. The road does not run level for many yards together—and a good part of the way the ground is falling, whilst the vegetation around is of the most luxuriant character. A dozen houses or so are eventually sighted, and this is the village of which we are in quest. The nearest station to it is Staveley, about five miles on the line for Windermere. It was from this place that Gabriel Camelford was ejected in 1662, becoming afterwards the first minister of the old Nonconformist interest at Tottlebank. From Staveley, Crook is not distant more than two-and-a-half miles, and the pedestrian should take this road on his return journey if he would enjoy some delightful scenery. There is in the village of Crook an Episcopal Church, whose register goes back to 1742, also a small Congregational chapel capable of holding eighty people, built in 1866 by the congregation connected with Zion Chapel, Kendal, in which are services on Sunday morning and evening. There is, however, no relic of an older building still once used by the Nonconformists, and not the fragment of a tradition lingering about the village likely to be helpful. Yet it is certain that a Nonconformist interest existed here at the beginning of the eighteenth century and probably before. The first known minister was the Rev. John Atkinson, who was educated in the academy of the Rev. R. Frankland, removing on his death to the Rev. John Chorlton's Academy, Manchester, June 26th, 1699. He settled at Crook on the completion of his college course, "where he was well approved of ; yet want of health, and not so well able to serve there," led to his removal to the Congregational Church at Cockermouth, in Cumberland. His dismission to that church is dated October 5th, 1701. At this place Mr. Atkinson laboured for many years. The Cockermouth Church Book says that his "services on earth were finished about

¹ "Congregational Magazine" for 1822, p. 276.

1732 or 3." The Rev. Samuel Bourn is the next minister of whom I have information. He was the eldest surviving son of the Rev. Samuel Bourn, for many years Nonconformist minister at Bolton, and was trained by the Rev. James Coningham, of Manchester. He settled at Crook in 1711, and married Miss Harrison, of Kendal. In 1720 he removed to Tunley, near Wigan, and thence to Chorley. His last charge was at Coseley, near Birmingham, where he died March 22nd, 1754. He was the author of numerous works of a sermonic and theological character. The Rev. Henry Knight immediately succeeded Mr. Bourn at Crook, but does not seem to have remained long. He removed probably to Dob Lane, near Manchester, and I imagine is the person referred to in Sir Thomas Baker's "*Memorials of a Dissenting Chapel*," where he is said to have assisted at the ordination of the Rev. John Seddon, M.A., of Manchester.¹ This was on October 22nd, 1742, and he is then called the minister of Cross Street, in Cheshire. The name of another minister who laboured at Crook has been preserved, the Rev. Abraham Ainsworth, of whom I know nothing. There was a congregation of 130 persons, one of whom was a county voter. This completes all the information I have respecting this old Nonconformist interest, which many years ago must have become extinct, or some traditions of it would have been in existence.

The Nonconformist interest at Stainton differs from that at Crook in at least two important respects. We have considerably more information about it, and the chapel is still in existence and in use. As already stated, the chapel is some five miles from Kendal, but the nearest station is Oxenholme, from which it is not more than three miles. It is very secluded; for though it stands on the roadside there is not much traffic that way. Externally it is much the same as it was when first erected. It is a low, white-washed, unpretentious building, having its long side to the road, and in it are the old-fashioned diamond-shaped window panes. It stands on a slight elevation, and access to it is by means of a flight of steps. Around it is a small graveyard, in which are two or three tombstones, the oldest of which is in memory of Roger Dickinson, of Storthend, who died March 12th, 1762, aged eighty-six. Within, the roof is open and barn-like, and from the old beams which span

¹ P. 31.

it lamps are suspended. Some twenty years ago the chapel was re-pewed, the earthen floor replaced by a boarded one, and the pulpit moved from the side facing the road to its present position. At the end of the building near the doorway is an opening into a small upper room, which has probably been used as a schoolroom. This part seems to have been added later. Underneath it is a cellar, to which there is an entrance from the road. In this upper building are two old tables, probably the original Communion tables; also parts of the old pews. The following inscriptions have been copied from such of the pew doors as remain:—

T.W.M.P. 96; E.B. 6 M.F. 99; H.S.E.S. 98; R.D.E.D. 1698 [probably Roger Dickinson named above]; E.I.T. 1698; 16 I.P. 98.

These dates suggest that the chapel was built before the close of the seventeenth century, about the time the one at Crook was erected. The position of these two buildings is highly suggestive. By the iniquitous Acts which for many years had been levelled at Nonconformity it was driven into these out-of-the-way places for shelter; and, though at the time of their erection the Act of Toleration was in force it was many years before it could be wooed back to the towns. To-day it is in rural England that Nonconformity has the hardest fight, a century and a half ago it was strongest here. It is somewhat singular that the first known minister at Stainton, as at Crook, was the Rev. John Atkinson. It does not often happen that two men of the same name, both Nonconformist ministers, are resident in places so near together, and about the same time, and at first I thought they were one and the same person. The evidence, however, such as there is, points in the contrary direction. A letter by the Rev. John Atkinson, of Cockermouth, is dated April 16th, 1724, whilst the Rev. John Atkinson, of Stainton, was the preacher, on the occasion of the death of Hannah, the daughter of Doctor Rotheram, May 15th, 1722. Mr. Atkinson, it will be remembered, had been at Cockermouth since 1701. Two sermons, preached by Mr. Atkinson, of Stainton, are now before me, entitled:—"The Father, the Word (or Son), and the Holy Ghost, the one True God; Together with the necessity of believing it. Prov'd and Apply'd, in Two Sermons, on 1 John, v. 7, with a Dedication plainly showing the Unreasonableness, Impiety, and

Dreadful Effects of Denying Christ to be the Most High God." They were published in 1726. There is no further information respecting Mr. Atkinson, except that on August 17th, 1747, Dr. Rotheram baptised "Thomas, son of John Atkinson," but whether this was the minister above named cannot be ascertained. A Mr. Kilpatrick, of Kirkpatrick, is named as minister at Stainton in 1734, assisting at the ordination of the Rev. Adam Dean, at Parkhead, Cumberland, on April 10th of that year. Probably his immediate



REV. JAMES SCOTT.

successor was the Rev. James Scott. This remarkable man was a native of Berwickshire, was born in 1710, and entered the Edinburgh University in the session of 1728-9. Hearing that there was a great dearth of ministers in England, he turned his face thitherwards, and together with a companion travelled on foot along bad roads until they reached Stainton, their expenses being only £3. In 1739 he became minister of the congregation here. Unpleasant circumstances led to his removal in 1741 to Horton-in-Craven,

where he was ordained May 20 in that year. In 1750 he removed to Tockholes, near Blackburn, where it is said he taught some of the people seventy years of age the Assembly's Catechism. He left Tockholes for Heckmondwike on May 29th, 1754, and, in addition to his pastoral duties, became the tutor of the Heckmondwike Academy. Many of his students became eminent preachers, and by means of his institution he did much to keep back the wave of Socinianism which a century ago swept especially northern England. Mr. Scott continued at Heckmondwike until his death January 11th, 1783; and the old Heckmondwike Academy eventually gave birth to Rotherham and Airedale Colleges. The only other minister of Stainton known to me was the Rev. James Somerville. He was born at Pitmuir, in the county of Merse, Scotland, in 1743, and entered Edinburgh University in 1762, where he remained ten years. On the 3rd of December, 1771, he was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Lauder, and in October, 1772, on the recommendation of Mr. Scott, of Heckmondwike, settled at Stainton. In 1775 he removed to Ravenstonedale, where he was ordained September 27th, removing from this place in 1784 to Branton, in Northumberland, where he laboured until death carried him away, July 8th, 1808.¹ After Mr. Somerville's departure the cause at Stainton seems to have drooped, and the place was almost deserted. Such was its condition when the Rev. G. Burder visited it on November 21st, 1779. Under that date he says:—

"I spent a Lord's Day at Kendal, and in the afternoon went to Stainton, an old meeting in the neighbourhood almost deserted."²

This decline was probably due to some extent to the rise of Congregationalism in Kendal. Mr. Somerville, I imagine, was the last minister at Stainton. The Kendal ministers have supplied the place ever since. At present service is held in the chapel on alternative Tuesday evenings only. The building is put down with accommodation for 100. In the early part of last century there was a congregation of 130 people, of whom eighty-six were county voters, and the people are described as mostly yeomen, tradesmen, and labourers.

¹ "Evangelical Magazine" for 1809, p. 45.

² "Memoirs of the Rev. G. Burder," p. 83.



GRASMERE.

IV.—CONGREGATIONALISM IN THE LAKE DISTRICT.

THE temptation is great as one enters Lakeland to attempt something in the way of description, but the task is not easy, because the scenery is so gorgeous. Nature here has put on her richest dress. Writers of all kinds, and of varying degrees of capability, have indulged in the pleasure, and both in poetry and prose, works of fiction and history, language has been stretched to its utmost capacity to set forth the charms of this part of our country. It is described as a "fairy region," "the Switzerland of England," a scene of "pure unadulterated loveliness," in every season of the year it is said to present pictures of "the most varied and exquisite beauty," and is a "desirable place for a lengthened sojourn or a short stay." Of Grasmere one good man says:—"It is the most beautiful bit of God's earth I know," and to pass from the grave to the gay an American catching sight of its lake exclaimed, "Nice pond that!" This sort of thing might be multiplied almost indefinitely. I shall not add to it, but bid the reader take the first opportunity to go and see for himself. Equally strong is the temptation to let the pen run upon the worthies associated with this district who have risen high in the literary world. In the quiet little graveyard at Grasmere rests all that is mortal of William and Mary Wordsworth; Southey sleeps in Crosthwaite Churchyard, Keswick. Professor Wilson, alias Christopher North, and De Quincy were connected with these parts; here Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, "passed his happy vacations," and Miss Harriet Martineau endeavoured "to work out her theory of life;" and Coleridge's son Hartley, by his "brilliant gifts, in their fitful and broken splendour, has caused the name of Coleridge to be remembered and repeated with pitying affection all through the Grasmere Vale."¹ But this also must be set aside for the more immediate purpose of this article, which is to tell as far as the fragments of information will permit the story of Congregationalism in that part of the Lake District which belongs to the county of Westmorland. Congregationalism here is not very old, nor does it cover a wide area, but it is respectable and encouraging. There are two churches at Winder-

¹ "English Pictures" (Religious Tract Society), p. 157.

mere, viz., Troutbeck Bridge and Carver Memorial. There used to be one at Ambleside, but no attempt has been made to bring Congregationalism to Grasmere. The church at Ambleside originated with the Rev. J. A. Coombs. He had been educated for the Congregational ministry at Hoxton, and was ordained as pastor of the Chapel Street Church, Salford, January 26th, 1820, when Dr. Winter, of London, delivered "an affectionate and impressive charge founded on Luke xix., 13." Here he remained for nearly twenty years, when he removed to Ambleside. There being at the time no Congregational Church in the neighbourhood, Mr. Coombs began to have worship in a room attached to his own residence, Belle Vue, in the spring of 1839. In November of the year following a church was formed which numbered shortly afterwards thirty members. The congregation increased to such an extent that larger and more commodious premises became a necessity. A suitable building site was purchased and presented by Thomas Wilson, Esq., of London, to whose generosity many of the Congregational churches of forty years ago owed their existence. A chapel was erected, being opened for worship on October 27th and 28th, 1841. Amongst the ministers taking part in the service were the Revs. William Brewis, Penrith; C. H. Bateman, Sedburgh; A. Jack, A.M., North Shields; R. G. Milne, Whitehaven; Robert Machray, Dumfries; Jonathan Harper, Alston; William Sedgwick, Ravenstonedale; John Guthrie, A.M., Kendal; Francis Evans, Ulverston; J. P. Jones, Furness; and John A. Coombs, the pastor of the church.¹ The chapel is described as "a commodious and elegant Gothic structure, measuring in the interior 48 feet by 33 feet, besides a vestibule and a vestry each 13 feet by 10 feet; a spacious schoolroom, capable of containing 200 children; and a convenient residence for a chapel-keeper. The chapel is lighted by four Gothic windows on each side, and is very handsomely fitted up. Seats are erected capable of comfortably seating 320 persons. From the roof are suspended six double oil lamps, by which it is well lighted in every part. The vestry is erected at the west end of the building, and the vestibule is on the east, with a double winding staircase leading into the chapel. The building is enclosed by an iron railing, and closely adjoins the road from

¹ "Evangelical Magazine" for 1841, p. 613.

Ambleside to Keswick.”¹ The entire cost was about £1,000, of which about £900 had been contributed at the time of opening. Mr. Coombs remained the minister of this place until about 1847, soon after which it was sold to the Wesleyans, by whom it is still used. Internally it has undergone considerable alterations—the old pews have been removed, and the place has been re-seated in modern style. Externally it remains much as when first built. It is a tall, white-looking structure, and lies at the “high end of the town.” In 1857 a Congregational Church was erected at Troutbeck Bridge, on the way to Ambleside, at a cost of £550, upon land given by R. H. Fell, Esq. The cause originated in the Evangelistic labours of Mr. R. Stainton, who was afterwards for many years a Congregational minister at Garden Street Chapel, Sheffield. The people collected by his ministrations formed a church in 1857 of the Congregational order. The Rev. John Reid was the first minister. He removed to Salem Chapel, Burnley, in 1867, and subsequently went to British Columbia. His successor at Troutbeck was the Rev. W. Park, from Carlisle, educated at Glasgow. He began his labours here in 1868, and removed to Southport in the following year. He is now at Croydon. He was followed by the Rev. J. Spaven, from the Evangelical Union, Scotland. He entered upon his ministry here in 1871, and closed it in 1878, removing to Falkirk, a church of the denomination he had left to come to Troutbeck Bridge. Mr. Spaven died at Kyneton, Victoria, July 7th, 1882, aged forty-one years. The Rev. R. B. Evatt followed in 1880, and remained until 1886, when he resigned, and is now in America. The present minister, Rev. Joseph Oddy, began his labours here in 1888, having previously held pastorates at Barnsley, Whitworth, and Tintwistle. The chapel is considerably larger than when first erected, and will seat about 350 people. It is a stone structure with an imposing front and belfry, is shaded by a number of trees, and stands by the roadside, upon a gentle elevation. About twelve months ago it was re-decorated, and now presents a clean, light, and comfortable appearance. It is carpeted throughout, has a platform pulpit, and over the entrance a small gallery. The membership of the church is about forty. For many years this was the only Congregational Church in Windermere.

¹ *Kendal Mercury*, October 30, 1841.

The Crossleys, of Halifax, the Somervell family, of Windermere, and the Fells, of Troutbeck Bridge, have taken great interest in the place, and the two latter families are still amongst the workers of the church. From the beginning it has been strictly a Congregational Church, though standing aloof from the Union. It was admitted into the Lancashire Congregational Union only about a year ago. About midway between Bowness and Windermere is the "Carver Memorial Congregational Church. Situated upon rising ground, it commands an extensive view, and was erected entirely at the cost of the family of the late William Carver, Esq., of Manchester and Windermere, who during his life often expressed his opinion that a Congregational Church should be placed between the same towns, so as to be easily accessible to the inhabitants of both."¹ It is in memory of him that the church has been built. It was opened for worship on May 6th, 1880, by the Rev. E. Mellor, D.D., of Halifax. The church is described as "in the early English style, built of local stone, with freestone dressings. The main or entrance front is broken up with a central gable, having an octagonal vestibule on the left, with a smaller vestibule and tower on the right. The whole of the seats, doors, &c., are constructed of Dantzic oak; the pulpit is of old oak, richly moulded; the whole of the windows are filled with stained glass in various devices; the large window is of painted glass, and is very fine. The church measures internally 61 feet by 33 feet without choir, and ceiled at a height of 30 feet from the floor, and will seat 450 persons."² The architect was Mr. R. Walker, of Kendal and Windermere. The church was formed in 1880, and the present minister, the Rev. William Taylor, who for thirty years had held the pastorate of Zion Chapel, Kendal, and who is Professor of Systematic Theology in the Evangelical Union, Theological Hall, Scotland, was at once secured as pastor. The membership of the church is about 100.

¹ "Congregational Year Book" for 1881, p. 468.

² Ibid.

V.—KIRKBY LONSDALE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

KIRKBY LONSDALE is a quiet, quaint, ancient little market-town in the Lune valley. It is just on the Lancashire border, but really in Westmorland. It has a railway station, but it is a mile and a half away, and to get to it means for any one travelling from Preston to go round by Lowgill or Clapham and Ingleton. The other and more direct way is to branch off at Carnforth for Arkholme, where a conveyance awaits certain trains. The distance to the town is some four or five miles, and the scenery is simply superb. Kirkby Lonsdale is ten miles from any other market town, and so is not much in touch with life. That means that few changes take place here. The population is very small, and the young people make their way to other and larger towns. Congregationalism has had a hard fight in the town. As in all parts of the county, so here, the Church influence is strong. Its story extends over nearly three-quarters of a century. It appears to have been introduced into the town by the Kendal and Lancaster Congregational Churches. It was on Sunday, November 26th, 1815, that the Rev. Joseph France, M.A., of the High Street Church, Lancaster, accompanied by friends from that town and Kendal, went to Kirkby Lonsdale to commence preaching in a room which had been engaged for the purpose. This room, "capable of containing from 150 to 200 hearers," and "newly accommodated with forms," was filled with attentive hearers the first day. A Mr. Hope stately ministered to the people during 1816, and valuable help was given by ministers belonging to the Yorkshire Itinerancy, who preached once a fortnight on Tuesday evenings. The Revs. R. Maclean, of Kendal, and John Cockin, of Holmfirth, are also named as coadjutors in the work. The effort met with such success that a larger room became a necessity, and so "a barn that had been recently erected" was purchased and "converted into a neat, commodious chapel, at an expense of nearly £400." This was opened for public worship on October 2, 1816, when the Rev. J. France, M.A., preached in the morning from II. Chronicles vi., 18; Rev. R. Maclean, of Kendal, in the afternoon, from Psalm cxxxii., 15; and the Rev. Wm. Eccles, of Leeds, in the evening, from Exodus xx., 24. The building had seats for about 300 persons, and after

the opening service a debt of £150 remained upon it. Mr. William Maclean, the son, I imagine, of the Rev. R. Maclean, of Kendal, took charge of the place in 1817, and the attendance is said to be about 200. He preached also at Hutton Roof, a village some three or four miles west of Kirkby Lonsdale. He left in the midsummer of 1819, and the "cause," being without a stated minister, began to languish, the congregation averaging about seventy, and the attendance at the Sunday school about fifty. Mr. Dunkerley followed in 1820. He preached also at Wray "a large and profligate village nine miles from Kirkby," where the Revs. G. Burder, P. S. Charrier, and others had preached occasionally, "but with very small encouragement." Services were also held at Barbon as well as at Hutton Roof. Mr. Dunkerley left in October, 1821, being followed in August of the year following by the Rev. W. Skinner, from Hackney College, who had previously preached about six months at Lancaster. Shortly after his settlement in 1823 (and not as the Calendar states, in 1815) a church was formed; and, in addition to Hutton Roof, Whittington, Keastwicke, Ireby, and Old Town are mentioned as places where he occasionally preached, whilst the Sunday school was enlarged at a cost of £26. Mr. Skinner was ordained here on September 23rd, 1823, and left in November, 1825. He eventually settled at Bruton, in Somersetshire, where for thirty years he continued to be the minister. He died there on the 12th of February, 1859, at the age of fifty-five years. The next minister was the Rev. S. Healey, who settled here in May, 1826, being ordained on the 25th of April following. Amongst the ministers taking part in the service were the Revs. D. T. Carnson and R. Slate, both of Preston; J. Ely, of Rochdale; S. Bell, of Lancaster; and D. Jones, of Kendal. Early in his ministry it is recorded that an infidel who had been accustomed to distribute tracts in the town and neighbourhood, brought all his stock of books to Mr. Healey, to be burned, and soon he and his family began to attend the preaching of the Gospel three times every Sabbath day. The County Union Report ending April, 1830, states that "a circumstance connected with the church at Kirkby Lonsdale served to render it desirable that it should be dissolved and reorganised; a measure which during the past year had been carried into effect with the assistance of the Rev. Messrs.

Bell, of Lancaster, Jones, of Kendal, and Hoyle, of Milnthorpe. This event took place on the 13th of January last, since which time three persons have been received into Communion, and two stand proposed. The present number in Church fellowship is ten, and there is a pleasing prospect of several others coming forward." At Wray, where Mr. Healey occasionally preached, through the kindness of the "sister of the clergyman at Bentham," a place for worship, free of expense, was provided for Mr. Healey and his friends. This was opened by the Rev. S. Bell, of Lancaster, in March, 1833, and services were held there on Sunday evenings, and occasionally on Monday evenings. In April, 1834, Mr. Healey resigned, and for several years was minister at Hazelgrove, near Stockport. His successor was a Mr. Birch, who began his labours here about 1835. Wray and Kirkby Lonsdale were worked together, but the arrangement does not seem to have given satisfaction to either party, consequently progress did not attend the work, and Mr. Birch resigned in the early part of 1838. In the same year Kirkby Lonsdale became joined to Milnthorpe, and Mr. Berry was the agent employed by the Union. The station still continued to be most discouraging, and eventually only four members were left, and the grant from the Union ceased to be given. About 1843, Mr. Joseph Carr, who had come into the town to teach a school in a room belonging to the chapel, began to hold religious services. The Sunday school was re-established, and the congregations so grew that an application for a grant from the Union funds was made in 1847. The application was favourably received, and Mr. Carr gave himself up to ministerial work. The Report for 1850 says that a day school had been commenced, having become a necessity, "to counteract the strong and baneful influence of High Churchism in the town." A part of the chapel premises was fitted up for this purpose at a cost of over £100. Mr. and Mrs. Carr taught the school. The fair prospect of success was speedily blighted, and the Report for April, 1853, says that "Kirkby Lonsdale, torn by internal dissensions, is all but abandoned for the present." The report sent to the annual District Meeting in February, 1855, stated that Mr. Carr had removed from the place and given up the premises; that the chapel, house, and school were free from debt except a loan of £123, and that the chapel

had been re-opened by the Rev. J. Sugden, of Lancaster. In that year the Rev. John Spencer removed from Garstang to Kirkby Lonsdale, and in the following year the church, which had been dissolved during the previous troubles, was re-formed with nine members. In 1861 Mr. Spencer resigned after a useful ministry, and removed to Inglewhite. He is now at Barrow-in-Furness without charge. The present minister, Rev. M. H. Sharp, who had been assistant about two years to the Rev. John Marshall, of Over, in Cheshire, entered upon his labours here on November 24th, 1861, and was ordained in June following. He is by many years the senior minister in the Preston District. On a small stipend, barely reaching £100 per year even with the grant from the Union, Mr. Sharp has continued for nearly thirty years doing a quiet but useful work. In 1871, the loan mentioned above of £123, which, with the interest, had accumulated to £135, was repaid, the people contributing £50, and the remainder being collected by Mr. Sharp. On the completion of his twenty-fifth anniversary his people resolved to commemorate the event by raising a fund to renovate their chapel or build a new one. Accordingly a bazaar was held in the summer of 1887, which, with a supplementary sale of work, realised £248. Amongst the generous friends of the interest here are the Dawsons, of Lancaster. In its early history, the late Edward Dawson, Esq., of Aldcliffe Hall, was accustomed to ride over on a Sunday, a distance of seventeen miles, to conduct the services; and it was chiefly owing to the liberal gifts of the present members of the family at the time the chapel was renovated in 1888, that soon after the re-opening no debt remained upon the place. The chapel of 1816 was built in an out-of-the-way place called "Back Lane," a circumstance which has not been helpful to the cause; but all efforts on the part of Mr. Sharp and his friends to secure a more favourable site for a new structure failed. The chapel was therefore rebuilt on the old site, and the opening service took place in March, 1888, when the Rev. James Wayman, of Blackpool, was the preacher. The cost of the undertaking was about £400, and a debt of only £40 remained after the opening. It is a neat, light, comfortable-looking building. The pews are all open, and the old pews have been used as panelling round the walls. The windows are of beautiful cathedral glass,

with yellow border; there is a platform pulpit, also a small organ. The sitting accommodation is about the same as that of the original building. The school, chapel, and minister's house are all under one roof. There is a small graveyard attached to it, in which a few interments have taken place. The membership of the church stands at about twenty, and the number of Sunday school children about 100. Mr. Sharp has just resigned the pastorate through impaired health, and increasing years. The church has been in receipt of help from the Union funds ever since its commencement, and is likely to be, so long as the town retains its present character; but the money spent has been to good purpose, even if the statistics just given do not show much change as compared with those of seventy years ago. It is from such places that our town churches often receive their most vigorous and useful members, and weakness here will soon affect us elsewhere.

VI.—KIRKBY STEPHEN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

WHELLAN describes Kirkby Stephen as a "market town situated on the left bank of the Eden, eleven miles south-west from Appleby."¹ It lies in the eastern part of the county of Westmorland, and is not far from the Yorkshire border. It "consists principally of one long street, extending from north to south. The houses have a clean and respectable appearance," and many of them are very ancient looking. Sixty years ago an attempt was made to establish a manufactory of coarse woollen hats, but without success; a cotton mill and a tannery shared the same fate. Things go on, therefore, in the quiet way they have done for years, and the population, which is not more than about 2,000, remains almost stationary. One of the principal objects of interest in the town is the old church, which dates back at least to the times of the Conqueror. Though it has undergone considerable restoration in recent times, it yet maintains its venerable appearance. In the interior are preserved many objects of interest. Just in the entrance

¹ "History and Topography of Cumberland and Westmorland," p. 742.

is a stone figure which unfortunately has been broken. It is a representation of Satan with his chains, but what use it was intended to serve in the church is not clear. A local worthy having taken a photograph of it, which he was accustomed to exhibit, was once asked who it was. He replied it is "The Old Man of all old *mans*!" In one corner of the church is also a large box full of small holes which are supplied with loaves every Sunday. These are taken away by the poor people who attend church, each hole having its claimant. Several altar tombs belonging principally to the Wharton and Musgrave families of four centuries ago, also adorn the chancel. We may not, however, linger here, but seek a much less pretentious building, where Congregationalism took form and being some eighty years ago. "The Independents," says Whellan, writing of Kirkby Stephen, "have a chapel in the New Inn Yard, purchased in 1810, and previously occupied by the Sandemanians and Baptists."¹ All other writers upon Westmorland say much the same thing. The first minister here of whom I have information was the Rev. John Capper. He was an agent of the County Union at Orrell, near Wigan, in 1810. About the end of 1813 he removed to Kirkham, where he remained some three years. Subsequently he was at Tosside, near Settle, for a short time, but not being properly invited, and remaining against the wishes of the people, many disorderly scenes ensued. He was ordained over the church at Kirkby Stephen April 8th, 1824, and was gone before 1835, when it was vacant. Who was his immediate successor has not been ascertained, but for many years there was no minister. In 1857 Ravenstonedale and Kirkby Stephen were worked together, and the Rev. John Moses, who had been trained amongst the Wesleyans, had charge of them. In the year following Mr. Moses left, and was succeeded in the two churches by the Rev. J. Barton, who was educated at Rotherham, and had previously laboured at Bakewell and Brassington. He remained only a short time, removing to Wirksworth. He was resident many years at Matlock without charge, where he died in 1874, aged seventy-one years. In 1859 the Rev. J. Howard followed. In 1863 he left for Hemel Hempstead, in Hertfordshire. After this the two churches separated, and the Rev. C. Callaway, M.A., from

¹ Ibid, F. 743.

Cheshunt College, accepted the pastorate of Kirkby Stephen in 1865. He resigned in 1868, and after holding the pastorate of the Congregational Church at Wellington, in Shropshire, for a short time, went to America. The Rev. T. Webster, from Airedale, followed in 1868, and removed to Tewkesbury, in Gloucestershire, in 1870. He is now at Stoke-sub-Hamdon, in Somerset. His successor was the Rev. P. Reid in the year following. His pastorate continued until 1874, when he removed to South Shields, where he



KIRKBY STEPHEN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

still labours. The Rev. T. W. Bowman, M.A., from Glasgow University, settled here in 1875, and resigned in 1878. In the following year the Rev. John Elstob was appointed pastor, but he remained only a year. He entered the Swedenborgian ministry, and is now at Farnworth. The Rev. J. E. Moore, from Worksop, began his ministry at Kirkby Stephen in 1880. He left in 1883 for Killamarsh, in Derbyshire, and is now at Chinley, in the same county. In 1884 the vacant pastorate was filled up by the Rev.

James Byers, from Nottingham Institute. He left in the following year for Wednesbury, and is now at Rugeley. The Rev. Henry Perfect succeeded him in 1886. He had been educated at Cotton End, and held pastorates at Aspatria, Witney (Oxon), Wigton, Silloth, and Barnard Castle. He resigned in 1888, and is now resident at Morecambe without charge. The present minister, Rev. R. F. Brown, from Bitterne, Southampton, entered upon duty here on the second Sunday in January, 1889. The church here is contrasted with the one at Kirkby Lonsdale in its frequent change of ministers. Whilst Mr. Sharp for nearly thirty years has stuck to his post at Kirkby Lonsdale, in that time Kirkby Stephen had no fewer than ten ministers. During the pastorate of Mr. Callaway in 1865 the present chapel was erected. In this work the congregation were assisted by Mr. Jackson, of London, and friends. It is described as "a simple nave, with hammer-beam roof, open about two-thirds the way up. There is a vestibule in front, with a narrow gallery over, and a vestry behind, with an organ gallery over it. It has a large doorway in the centre, with a handsome four-light window over it, and a spire seventy feet high in the corner of the building." The total cost of the building is put down at £850, the site having been presented by Mr. Hewitson, who refused several offers for it that he might devote it to its sacred use when "the fulness of the time was come." It is a beautiful little building, and stands well to the front of the "one long street" which runs through the town. It contains accommodation for some 300 persons. The old chapel is on the other side of the street, hidden away in a yard, to which there is only a narrow passage. It is a substantial square building, contains a small gallery, and is now used for a Sunday school. Since its erection eighty years ago, it has been considerably altered. It was originally damp, low, and unattractive; but some years ago it was gutted, renovated, and raised to the extent of five feet. Behind it is the burial ground, which is said to contain many bodies. Connected with Kirkby Stephen is a small chapel at Nateby, a hamlet about a mile away. It was erected about fifteen years ago, and will seat a little over 100 people. The membership of the Kirkby Stephen Church is fifty,

¹ "Congregational Year Book" for 1865, p. 306.

and in the Sunday school are seventy scholars. Amongst those who have been long and intimately associated with the church is Mr. Hogg, whose son, the Rev. A. T. Hogg, is the respected minister of the Lancaster Road Congregational Church, Preston.

VII.—RAVENSTONEDALE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

THE village, or "toon" (for such it is to many of the inhabitants), of Ravenstonedale is about a mile and a half from the station bearing that name. It consists of a "strange, straggling collection of cottages, medium-sized dwellings, farmhouses, &c., situate on the brow of a hill fairly steep." Most of the houses are low, white-washed, and ancient looking: few changes having come over these parts for a generation or two. The Episcopal church, with its tower and low porches, stands a monument of considerable antiquity, and a Wesleyan chapel, erected in 1839, is a memorial of the Centenary of Wesleyan Methodism.

The Congregational church here claims, and with good reason, to be the oldest Nonconformist interest in the county. It originated with the labours of the Rev. Christopher Jackson, who was ejected in 1662 from Crosby Garrett, some five miles away. Respecting him, Calamy says:—

"He was born at Leeds. Being designed for trade, he was put out an apprentice; but his friends observing his bookishness, took him from his business, and sent him to Cambridge, where he studied under Mr. Joseph Hill. He was a very pious man, of a holy life, and competent learning. He was first turned out somewhere in Yorkshire, and afterwards at Crosby."¹

After his ejection Calamy says, "he lived meanly upon a little estate in the parish of Ravistondale, preaching occasionally. Some ministers who had conformed, once telling him that he had a bare coat, he made this answer:—'If his coat was bare, it was not turned.'"² The friend and patron of Nonconformity in this district

¹ "Nonconformist's Memorial" (1802). Vol. iii., p. 354.

² Ibid.

was Lord Wharton, of Wharton Hall, close by. Under his protection the sturdy men of the dale continued to attend the ministrations of Mr. Jackson, and eventually a chapel was built. The date of its erection is not known, and the year 1662, given in the Congregational Year Book, cannot be correct. The fact is that date is conveniently taken when any difficulty is experienced, though it is oftener incorrect than otherwise. All that can be said is that the building was erected some time previous to the beginning of the eighteenth century. Following Mr. Jackson as minister here was the Rev. Timothy Puncheon. He was educated at Mr. Frankland's Academy, when it was held at Attercliffe, entering as a student February 19, 1687. Probably his first settlement was Ravenstonedale. On June 7, 1693, five young ministers were ordained at Rathmell, and amongst those taking part in the service were the Revs. O. Heywood, R. Frankland, Mr. Dawson, J. Carrington, and T. Puncheon, who was then at Ravenstonedale. Lord Wharton, who died February 4, 1694, gave by will the sum of £100, the interest of which had to be given to Mr. Puncheon, the then Dissenting minister, and his successors for ever. This endowment was afterwards considerably increased by other benefactions, so that in 1777, with the voluntary subscriptions of the people, the minister's stipend amounted to £40—a not inconsiderable sum in those days. Mr. Puncheon was subsequently at Riveley, in Northumberland, where he died in 1717. Information about the history of the place for several years after this is exceedingly scanty. The Rev. John Magee was ordained as minister here on April 14th, 1713-14. About this time dissension arose in the congregation, probably owing to Mr. Magee's appointment. Subjoined is a letter bearing upon this matter from the Rev. James Towers, then at Rathmell, afterwards at Tockholes, to the Rev. Peter Walkden, of Hesketh Lane :—

Sire,—According to your request, I here give you what account I can concerning Revenstonedale (tho' I have never been in those parts since Mr. Magee was ordained), only I heard something by one who called at our house lately, coming from thence, who gave me y^e following account. I fear matters there are very uncomfortable, and y^e unhappy division ceases not, but rather increases, growing on to a seperation. For altar is set up against altar, already two communions, though not two fixed pastors as yet; what

will be I know not. Dr. Dixon, of Whitehaven, came and administered y^e Sacrament to y^t party against Mr. Magee privately, even before Mr. Magee undertook to administer, for y^e (it seems) would have y^e leading hand. Since Mr. Magee has administered it to his people publickly, it looks very like for a totall seperation, a seperation in judgment and affection there has been already, and y^e other seems to follow, and will undoubtedly if y^e can procure a stipend for another minister. How Mr. Dixon can clear himself of ye sin of schism I know not. (God, in His infinite mercy, heall our unhappy wide divisions, and not destroy us for them.) Thus I have given you an account of y^e matter. I confess its no comfortable end, but its true according to the information I receiv'd. I heartily wish I could have given you a more acceptable one, so with hearty respects to you and yours, concludes me your humble servant, JAMES TOWERS, Rathmill.—June y^e 8th, 1714.

The separation which Mr. Towers feared shortly afterwards took place, and the Rev. James Mallison was appointed minister to the seceding party. He was at Blennerhasset in 1715, and so probably removed from this place to Ravenstonedale. He stayed only a few months, and removed to Howden, where he laboured for several years. In the Northowram Register is the following notice of his marriage :—

Mr. James Mallison, Minr. at Holden [should be Howden], & Mrs. Dorcas Almond, of York, mar. Sept. 2 [1718].¹

Mr. Magee remained at Ravenstonedale until 1732, when he resigned, and the Rev. Mr. Richie was appointed his successor. In early times the Nonconformists were accustomed to attend the Parish Church as well as their own meeting place. Writing in 1777, Dr. Burn says :—

“In the old church (rebuilt 1744) there was a small bell called the Saints' bell, which was wont to be rung after the Nicene Creed, to call in the dissenters to the sermon. And to this day the dissenters, besides frequenting the meeting-house, oftentimes attend the church.”²

Mr. Richie's course of life was no more smooth than that of his predecessor. After he had ministered twelve months, an attempt was made by the trustees to remove him from the office and make

¹ P. 213.

² “History of Westmorland.”

a fresh appointment. A lawsuit followed, which cost the people a considerable sum of money, Mr. Richie obtaining the judgment in his favour. How long he remained after this I do not know. The next known minister was the Rev. John Blackburne, one of Dr. Rotheram's students, being in his academy at Kendal in 1737. His first settlement was Ravenstonedale, whence he removed after a short ministry to St. John's Court, London. He was afterwards at Newbury, where he laboured until his death. He published a thanksgiving sermon preached at St. John's Court, April 25th, 1749, and a funeral sermon some four years later. He was also editor of Mr. Hopton Haynes's "Scripture Account of the Attributes and Worship of God, and of the Character and Offices of Jesus Christ," published in 1750. The Rev. Samuel Lowthion followed. He was a native of Penruddock, and like his predecessor educated by Dr. C. Rotheram, at Kendal, entering the academy there about 1740. On completing his college course he settled at Ravenstonedale for a short time, and removed to Penrith about 1745. Here he remained until 1752, when he became minister of the congregation at Hanover Square, Newcastle. His sermon preached at the ordination of the Rev. Caleb Rotheram, at Kendal, on the 26th of August, 1756, was referred to in a previous article. During his residence at Newcastle he kept an academy, from which several young men went forth to the ministry. He died there in May, 1780, and was buried in the north aisle of St. Nicholas's Church. A handsome mural tablet was prepared to perpetuate his memory, the inscription upon which, composed by his friend Dr. John Rotheram, reads thus:—

Near this place are deposited the remains of the
REV. SAMUEL LOWTHION,

Twenty-eight years minister of the congregation of Protestant Dissenters in Hanover Square, in this town; who have placed this public testimony to their lively and lasting remembrance of the truth and energy of his public instructions, the fervour of his animated devotion, and his liberal, benevolent, Christian spirit, by which he enlarged the understanding, warmed and animated the heart, and enjoyed universal esteem.

The tablet was not erected because the then incumbent refused to give permission unless the word "truth" were expunged from it, to which the subscribers could not assent. In the list of students

educated by Dr. Doddridge appears the name of Richard Simpson, who entered his academy in 1745. He is put down as having a charge in Westmorland, but the name of the place is not given. It is probable that it was at Ravenstonedale. He was afterwards at Warley, near Halifax, for many years. The Rev. William Nicholls gives the Rev. William Scott, "who removed to near Jedburgh," as minister here in 1770, and Mr. Tetley in 1774.¹ There is some error here, for Mr. Tetley was at Ravenstonedale in 1767. The following from the Cockermouth Church Book is decisive upon the point :—

"1767, April 5th. Mr. *Ord* has been with us a whole year ; but not being ordained, we could not have the seals of the covenant administered to us, though wee applied to those ministers who professed to be orthodox : they refused to give us any assistance unless we would apply to those ministers whose principles wee opposed, which wee looked upon as giving up the cause we were contending for, and snekingly betray the truth of the Gosple into the hands of the opposition. Wee then made application to the Rev. Mr. James Tetley, of Ravenstonedale, who is not in connection with the Cumberland provincial, who indulged us with the favour to come and preach to us, and administered both ordinances, the Lord's Supper, and baptised children, which our orthodox had denied us."²

In a list of students educated at the Heckmondwike Academy appears the name of James Tetley, junior, of Sowerby, in 1762. Whether this was Mr. Tetley, of Ravenstonedale, I do not know. The Rev. James Somerville followed in 1775, preaching his first sermon as minister on May 28th from Acts x., 29. His ordination took place on September 27th following, when the Revs. Selby Ord, of Cockermouth ; A. Allatt, of Forton ; and Luke Pratman, of Cotherstone, conducted the service. In 1781 he received a call to Branton, in Northumberland, and on the 21st of March in that year preached his farewell sermon to his Ravenstonedale congregation from Acts xx., 32. "It was a mournful day to him," writes

¹ "History and Traditions of Ravenstonedale," p. 81.

² "Congregational Magazine", for 1822, p. 276.

his biographer, "and to many who esteemed him highly for his work's sake, and to whom he had been both acceptable and of much use during his ministry of nearly ten years amongst them."¹ He laboured here until his death, which occurred on July 8th, 1808, in the sixty-fifth year of his age. A funeral sermon was preached to his old congregation at Ravenstonedale by the Rev. John Hill, who succeeded him there. Previous to him, however, the Rev. Mr. Smith occupied the pulpit here between the years 1784 and 1790. The Rev. John Hill, just named, was born in 1753, and trained by the Revs. Joseph Barber, S. Brewer, and John Kello. On completing his college course about 1780 or 1781 he settled at Preston, removing after a short time to Haslingden. In 1787 he became pastor of Lady Glenorchy's Chapel, Carlisle, and in the latter part of 1790 settled at Ravenstonedale. His contemporary at the Parish Church was Dr. Robinson, with whom he was on terms of close intimacy. Both of them were heavy smokers, and often they met together to discuss the use of the manuscript in preaching. Mr. Hill always advised Dr. Robinson to dispense with it, which he was inclined to do, but thought it impossible. Mr. Hill laboured at Ravenstonedale for nineteen years, dying there in 1809. His remains were interred in the graveyard of the chapel, and a tombstone standing against the wall is thus inscribed :—

Erected by the Church in Respect to the Memory of the
 Rev. JOHN HILL,
 Nineteen years a Faithful, Laborious, and Useful minister at this place,
 Who departed this life triumphantly the 26th November, 1809,
 aged 56.

Here lies interr'd beneath this stone,
 A sinner saved by grace alone ;
 Unmov'd, uninjured, may his dust remain,
 Till the last Trump shall bid him rise again.

During Mr. Hill's ministry in 1802, the sum of £250 was spent in removing a cottage which stood against the road in front of the chapel, enlarging the burial ground, and building a vestry for Sunday school purposes.

¹ "Evangelical Magazine" for 1809, p. 47.

The Rev. James Muscutt was the next minister. He was educated at Hackney, and settled first for a short time at Darlington. He accepted the invitation "on condition that the Church be reorganised and put upon the Independent or Congregational plan." This was done, and Mr. Muscutt was ordained minister on June 12th, 1811. The Revs A. Carnson, of Cotherstone; Mr. Norris, jun., of Alston; Mr. Jackson, of Green Hammerton; and Mr. Norris, sen., of Ellenthorpe, were the ministers who conducted the service. In 1815 he removed to Cockermouth, where he died August 7th, 1819, aged thirty-four years. The Rev. R. H. Bonner was appointed Mr. Muscutt's successor, Mr. Nicholls says, in 1815. He was, however, not ordained to the pastorate here until August 27th, 1817, when the Rev. E. Stillman, of Keld, began the service with prayer and reading the Scriptures. The Rev. William Vint, of Idle (Mr. Bonner's tutor), delivered the introductory discourse, gave the charge, and offered the ordination prayer, and the Rev. A. Carnson, of Cotherstone, addressed the people. Mr. Bonner continued to be minister here until 1835. He was followed in 1836 by the Rev. William Hasell. Things seem to have been in a sad way here about this time. Mr. Hasell, it appears, seceded to the Wesleyans, and with him went a considerable proportion of the congregation, for whom the Wesleyan chapel previously referred to was erected in 1839. From the *Kendal Mercury* of February 6th, 1836, the following is extracted:—

"A correspondent sends us a most deplorable account of the dilapidated state of the Independent Chapel in Ravenstonedale, from which it appears that the windows are all smashed, the walls and plaster giving way, tombstones overturned, and the burial ground altogether in a most 'ruinated condition.' We are told also that not more than half a dozen persons now go to worship there. The affairs of the Dissenting congregation in Ravenstonedale are, we believe, involved in the expensive mazes of the law, and from the description before us the chapel now stands as a beacon to warn all of the distress and ruin attendant on litigation."

In 1837 Mr. Sedgwick was minister, in 1844 Mr. Bryan, and in

¹ "History and Traditions of Ravenstonedale" (Nicholls), p. 83.

1846 the Rev. W. Mathison. He continued here until 1856, preaching his farewell sermon on Monday evening, March 17th. He removed to Market Drayton, leaving there for Tasmania after a ministry of two years. From 1856 to 1862 Ravenstonedale and Kirkby Stephen were united, the Revs. John Moses, J. Barton, and J. Howard successively ministering there. In 1863 they again became separate, and the Rev. J. Barnfather accepted the pastorate of the Ravenstonedale Church. He removed to Dent in 1867, and thence to Parkhead, in Cumberland. He is now resident at Prestwich, near Manchester, without charge. In 1868 the Rev. R. Pool, from Parton, accepted the pastorate, and in the following year he removed to Sedbergh. He is now labouring at Shelley, near Huddersfield. His successor was the Rev. William Nicholls, from Kendal, in 1869. He continued his ministrations until 1883, when he removed to Blackford Bridge, near Bury, where he still labours. He is the author of the "History of Ravenstonedale," previously referred to. The Rev. W. M. Fell followed in 1884. He was educated at Lancashire College, and had previously laboured at Wellington (New Zealand), Chorley (Lancashire), Portland, and Puddletown. In 1887 he resigned and returned to New Zealand. The present minister, Rev. C. Illingworth, entered upon duty here at Christmas of the same year. He joined the ministry in 1854, and previous to his settlement at Ravenstonedale laboured at Wyke, near Halifax, then at Lendal Chapel, York. During his residence in York he interested himself in several movements of a philanthropic character. The value of his services in this capacity was testified to by a representative gathering of the citizens in the Council Chamber of the Guildhall, presided over by the Lord Mayor (Sir Jos. Terry), to present him with an illuminated address and purse containing £150 on his departure for Ravenstonedale. Amongst those who were present and addressed the meeting were the Dean of York and Canon Fleming, and to the testimonial the Archbishop of York sent £5, with a request that his name be added to the list of subscribers. The chapel stands on the right-hand side about half way up the slope of the village. It is a low oblong building, its long side being towards the road. There is a large graveyard in front, ornamented with a few trees, and a considerable number of tombstones. To the left is a small flight of

steps leading into the schoolroom, made in part from a portion of the chapel gallery. Over the entrance here is the following inscription :—

“This chapel roof was improved and the Belfry Erected in grateful remembrance of William Carver, Esq., of Kersal, near Manchester, who was called to his home in Heaven on the 25th day of April, A.D. 1889.”

It is a comfortable room, and will accommodate about sixty scholars. The chapel, which has sittings for a little over 100 persons, is a bright and neat little place. It contains a small organ, and there is a gallery over the doorway, upon which is a brass plate thus inscribed :—

“This gallery was Built by the procurement of The Reverend Mr. Ralph Milner. Anno Dom. 1731.”

The hymn books in use are the generous gift of the son of the present minister. It is not known when the present structure was erected. A recent writer says :—

“A document deposited in the archives of Orton Vicarage, and supposed to be in the handwriting of the author of the *Standard History of Westmorland*, Dr. Burn, states that it was built in 1726, and registered at Appleby on or about the 10th of April, 1727, on a piece of ground, the property of Richard Hewetson, of Ellergill, which he sold for 6*l.*, and of which he allowed 4*l.* towards its erection.”

About this time there was a congregation of 300, four of whom are described as gentlemen, and most of the others as tenants under Lord Wharton. The building has, of course, been altered since then, but the walls are the same. If the date given above be correct, there must have been an earlier structure, concerning which I have no information. About 1868, during Mr. Pool's ministry, the chapel was re-pewed, and floored with boards; the windows also were altered. Higher up the hill is a good-sized pleasant-looking manse, the view from which is charming. It is quite modern, and

contrasts favourably with the former one, a few yards away, upon which is the inscription :—

I. A.

1715.

This is now a farmhouse, and attached to it is “the parson’s coachhouse.” Here, no doubt, the Rev. John Hill kept his shandry, said to have been the first introduced into Ravenstonedale. This relic is still preserved in the great house at “The Green.” A number of fine Scotch firs luxuriate on a piece of spare ground close by, which tradition says a Scotch minister gave to the people on condition that they would plant them. What are locally known as helm winds are often felt in great force at this spot, springing up in a moment’s time, and the windows of the houses are sometimes covered with spray from the sea. Service is held in the chapel on Sundays—morning and evening—the congregation in the evening often bordering upon 100. The membership of the church stands at twenty-two. It is connected with the Yorkshire Union, and according to the Year Book for 1890-1, published by that Union, the chapel, manse, school, library, and farmhouse underwent considerable repairs in the year preceding, at a cost of £142.

VIII.—MILNTHORPE AND OTHERS.

To complete the account of Westmorland Congregationalism it will be necessary to devote a few sentences to several interests no longer in existence. About 1819, the Gospel was introduced into Milnthorpe, which is then described as “a dark and neglected corner.” Mr. Henry Hewitson, of Kendal, purchased some property here, part of which he fitted up and converted into a chapel. It was opened as such on Sunday, March 5th, 1820, when two sermons were preached by Mr. Stowell, a student from the Blackburn Academy, and the Rev. G. Greatbatch, of North Meols, to large and attentive congregations. Along with Milnthorpe was worked Burton, where a commodious room was opened for worship in September, 1818. The Rev. Joseph Smedley, who had been educated at Gosport Academy, and laboured for a short time at Stepney Chapel, Warrington, was appointed minister towards the end of 1820. In March of the year following the congregation

here is said to be 200, and that at Burton nearly 100. In that year a church was formed consisting of fourteen members, and in April, 1822, Mr. Smedley left. His successor was the Rev. James Hargreaves. He was born at Blackburn on August 23, 1799, and educated at Idle Academy. He began his ministry at Milnthorpe in the summer of 1823, and was ordained there on the 28th of July, 1824. Amongst those who assisted in the service were the Revs. James Parsons, of York; E. Parsons, of Leeds; W. Vint, of Idle Academy; and J. Jefferson, of Kendal. Besides Milnthorpe, Mr. Hargreaves preached in many of the surrounding villages, and once in three weeks at Sedbergh, some fifteen miles away. The County Union Report, ending April, 1825, says that a church had been formed during the past year by the kind assistance of the Revs. J. Jefferson, of Kendal, and S. Bell, of Lancaster. This must mean re-formed, for it has already been stated that Mr. Smedley formed one in 1821. In November, 1825, Mr. Hargreaves removed to Stone, in Staffordshire, where he remained for three years. He died on November 10, 1869, at Morecambelake, in Dorsetshire, after a ministry of thirty-nine years. The Rev. Giles Hoyle, "a respectable member of the church at Cannon Street, Preston," was dismissed to the church at Milnthorpe, of which he became pastor on November 3rd, 1826. In that year a chapel formerly occupied by the Wesleyan Methodists was hired for Congregational purposes. On the 24th of April, 1827, he was ordained here. In October, 1831, he removed to Stalybridge, thence to Ancoats, Manchester, and afterwards to Northowram, where he died October 27th, 1861, aged sixty-eight years. The Rev. R. Jones, educated at the Blackburn Academy, and who had laboured a short time at Colne, followed in the beginning of 1832. He resigned in 1837. At the September District Meeting of that year it was stated that the Lord's Supper had not been administered at Milnthorpe during the last two years. The opening of the new Episcopal church in 1837 affected the Congregational interest here, and after Mr. Jones's resignation the chapel was closed and let for a school. Matters remained thus for nearly two years, when the building was re-opened for worship in July, 1839. It was joined to Kirkby Lonsdale, and the Rev. John Berry was minister. He was followed in August, 1841, by a Mr. Riddle, a Town Missionary, and on the 15th of

December, 1842, a church consisting of ten members was again formed, the Revs. C. H. Bateman, of Sedbergh, and W. Sedgwick, of Ravenstonedale, conducting the service. The Rev. John Yeates was the next minister, beginning duty here in January, 1844. He remained only a little over a year, and then Milnthorpe ceased to be a County Union station. About 1851 the Rev. Richard Jones again became minister. The minutes of the Preston District for February, 1857, say that the Gospel is "still occasionally preached here by Mr. Jones." After this time the place was supplied for a few years, and then the cause, which had had such a chequered career, was given up. The chapel, capable of holding about 200 persons, was Mr. Hewitson's private property, and in 1866 it was sold. The following is a copy of so much of the bill announcing the sale as relates to the chapel :—

Desirable property in the town of Milnthorpe for sale. To be sold by Public Auction, by Mr. Edward Burton, on Friday, the 27th day of July, 1866, at the Cross Keys Inn, in Milnthorpe. The sale to commence at four o'clock in the afternoon.

Lot 1. All that Erection or Building, now used as an Independent Chapel, and situate in Milnthorpe, in the county of Westmorland ; and also all those two Messuages or Dwelling-houses, situate beneath the said chapel, with the Garden, Out-offices, and appurtenances thereunto respectively belonging, as the same are now in the respective occupations of Mr. John Mayor and another.

The building in Lot 1, now used as a chapel, might, at a trifling cost, be converted into a substantial and desirable residence.

The respective tenants will show the premises, and all further information may be obtained on application to Mr. Henry Hewitson, of Kendal, the owner ; or at the office of Messrs. Harrison and Son, Solicitors, Kendal.

An Independent chapel was erected at Brough, near Kirkby Stephen, in 1824, by Mr. Charles Davies, being opened on April 7th of that year. In 1826 it was supplied by the Rev. John Capper, of Kirkby Stephen. It is now converted into dwelling-houses. At Crosby Garrett, where the Rev. Christopher Jackson was ejected in 1662, a chapel was erected in 1815 by Mr. Greenwood, who laboured here for many years. The Rev. Walter Mathison, the Ravenstonedale minister, had charge of the place for some time, and the Rev. William Fawcett, who married the daughter of Mr. Greenwood, was afterwards minister. At Birks, a small hamlet about a mile and a half from Warcop, are the remains of an

old chapel. The date of the foundation is given as 1754, and its registers go back to 1757. It was occupied formerly by Sandemanians, and in 1829 by Independents, the Rev. John Capper supplying it. Subsequently it was used by Baptists and Methodists successively; and writing in 1860, Whellan says "it is now used for farming purposes, and occasionally for preaching."¹ There was a burial ground connected with it. A meeting was held at Appleby on April 17th, 1811, of the Congregational ministers of Westmorland and Cumberland, who had formed an association "for the spread of the Gospel in those benighted parts of the nation." These ministers had already preached frequently in Appleby and nine or ten adjacent villages, and formed a church there consisting of about sixteen members. It was decided by them to get pecuniary help, so that an itinerant might be supported. In 1827 the Rev. William Selby was minister here. About this time also he had charge of Temple Sowerby, where a building had been converted into an Independent Chapel in 1813. The minister here in 1835 was the Rev. G. Nettleship. All these interests became extinct years ago. The latest addition to Westmorland Congregationalism is in the church at Little Asby. The chapel erected here in 1889 owes its existence to the will of the late Mr. Joseph Jackson, formerly a native of these parts, who died at Shoreditch, London, June, 1871. Since that time his will has been subject to litigation, and the trustees have only been able to carry out his wishes thus recently. The situation of the edifice is unique. It stands on a breezy swell of the Westmorland Moors, is immediately surrounded by only four houses, but a scattered farming population exists in the neighbourhood. Kirkby Stephen, the nearest town, is six miles distant. The style of architecture is Gothic, of an early character. There is a minister's house attached to the building. The sitting accommodation is about 150. The chapel was opened by the Rev. James Wayman, of Blackpool, in September, 1889, and the present minister, the Rev. J. Cockram, formerly of Garstang, began his labours here shortly afterwards. There is a small day school in connection with the place, of which he also has charge. The church was admitted into the Lancashire Congregational Union this year.

¹ "History and Topography of Cumberland and Westmorland." p. 772.

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